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ABSTRACT

This document records the oral and written testimony of representatives of veterans' groups and of the Department of Veterans Affairs at a congressional hearing on H.R. 996, the Veterans Education Outreach Program. That bill would continue funding for the program, which helps recruit veterans to receive the college education to which they are entitled and pays colleges $100 for each eligible veteran that the colleges recruit. The testimony was highly supportive of the program and favored increasing the number of colleges that have recruiting offices for veterans, funded through this program. The document also contains the text of the bill, statements from the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Blinded Veterans Association, and questions and answers of witnesses. (KC)

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H.R. 996—VETERANS EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAM

ED359401

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
OF THE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRD CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MARCH 25, 1993

Printed for the use of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Serial No. 103-6

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CONTENTS

March 25, 1993

	Page
H.R. 996—Veterans Education Outreach Program	1
OPENING STATEMENTS	
Chairman Montgomery	1
WITNESSES	
Bagley, Vera L., member, board of directors, National Association of Veterans Program Administrators	7
Prepared statement of Ms. Bagley	29
Brinck, Michael F., national legislative director, AMVETS	13
Prepared statement of Mr. Brinck	39
Buckley, Benjamin C., director, concurrent admissions program,, Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges	9
Prepared statement of Mr. Buckley	35
Manhan, Bob, assistant director, national legislative service, Veterans of Foreign Wars	12
Prepared statement of Mr. Manhan	37
Vogel, R. John, Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by Grady Horton and Dean Gallin	2
Prepared statement of Mr. Vogel	24
MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD	
Bills:	
H.R. 996	17
Statements:	
Paralyzed Veterans of America	42
Blinded Veterans Association	45
Written committee questions and their responses:	
Chairman Montgomery to Department of Veterans Affairs	48
Chairman Montgomery to National Association of Veterans Program Administrators	50
Chairman Montgomery to Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges	53
Chairman Montgomery to Veterans of Foreign Wars	84
Chairman Montgomery to AMVETS	86

H.R. 996—VETERANS EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAM

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1993

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
Washington, DC

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9:30 a.m., in room 334, Cannon House Office Building, the Honorable G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Montgomery, Penny, Slattery, Clement, Clyburn, Stump, Smith and Quinn.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY

Mr. MONTGOMERY. We will move into the hearing on H.R. 996, to establish the veterans' education, certification and outreach program in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Now, this is a cost of instruction program that was authorized back in 1972. I will ask the witnesses, John Vogel, who is an old friend of ours, to come up. Mr. Horton will be with him and Dean Gallin, who is the Deputy Assistant to General Counsel. That would be our first panel, and we will ask them to come to the witness stand.

Let me further say that in 1986, the program was renamed the Veterans Education Outreach Program, referred to as VEOP, and under the public law, the Higher Education Act of 1992 failed to include funding for VEOP past June 30, 1993.

We believe VEOP is an important program and provides significant assistance to veteran students. H.R. 996 would continue the VEOP program in the Department of Veterans Affairs. It would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide funding. It would require that participating institutions, that is, the colleges and universities, have a minimum of 50 veterans receiving educational assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs. It would require the Office of Veterans Affairs to provide services to veteran certification outreach, recruitment, and special education. It would provide that to the degree that appropriations are made available, participating institutions be paid $100 for each eligible veteran. It authorizes $3 million for the program in fiscal year 1994.

As we consider H.R. 996, we should keep in mind that the GI bills have been a great investment for our country. There is no

question about it. The educational benefits and the quality we have brought into the service are certainly worth looking into.

With that brief explanation, we will recognize our good friend, John Vogel.

Mr. VOGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is a pleasure to be with you. I have a brief summary statement I would like to read and ask that the full statement be made a part of the record.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Without objection.

Mr. VOGEL. Thank you, sir.

STATEMENT OF R. JOHN VOGEL, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR BENEFITS, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACCOMPANIED BY GRADY HORTON AND DEAN GALLIN

Mr. VOGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before this committee to provide the views of the Department of Veterans Affairs on H.R. 996, a bill to establish a veterans' educational certification and outreach program.

The measure would authorize VEOP that was repealed at the end of the last congressional session, except that VA rather than the Department of Education would administer the program.

Under this legislation, the VEOP Office of Veterans Affairs at each institution would be responsible for veteran certification, outreach, recruitment, special education programs, and other duties. Any school having 50 or more veterans, including members of the Selected Reserve and eligible persons who are in receipt of educational assistance, would be eligible to subsequently receive VEOP grant monies.

Mr. Chairman, at his confirmation hearing, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jesse Brown, indicated that while he would encourage schools to continue to recruit and assist veterans in reaching educational and training objectives, he believes that the need for a formal program like VEOP to promote and fund such functions clearly is diminished.

The VEOP was repealed by Public Law 102-325, the Higher Education Act of 1965 Reauthorization Act, signed on July 23, 1992. At that point the need for the program had been materially reduced. Many of the same functions were being performed through student support services for enrolled students' and veterans' upward bound projects under the Upward Bound Program that specifically targeted veterans.

We note that the veterans' education outreach function to be continued by the VEOP would largely duplicate the broad range of outreach and transition assistance activities which VA provides, along with the Departments of Defense and Labor. This is in addition to the ongoing outreach efforts, by VA field stations with veterans' groups and school officials.

In sum, the VEOP has been beneficial to a limited segment of veterans in the educational community, but has been superseded by more comprehensive programs of outreach and assistance for veterans. While it certainly has been a positive program, the VEOP is not an absolutely necessary program.

In view of this and considering budgetary needs and constraints, the VA cannot support enactment of this measure.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. I will be pleased to answer any questions that you or members of the committee may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Vogel appears on p. 24.]

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Well, thank you, Mr. Vogel.

I will ask the first question. Reading your testimony, the Veterans Department thinks this is a good program, but you are not recommending that it be funded. OMB has recommended that it not be funded. Is that the correct assumption?

Mr. VOGEL. Yes, the assumption is that while it would be beneficial, that the need for it is not as critical or as crucial as it at one time had been, and the cost appears to be modest. But all things considered, $3 million is a sum that does not need to be expended. That is the view of the administration, sir.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Well, this program is running until June of this year, and if it is not funded, OMB does not ask for the money and it is not funded, I guess, do we have to authorize this? We have to authorize it, and then I guess it would be up to the Appropriations Committee to fund it, but OMB would oppose the funding; is that correct?

Mr. VOGEL. I believe that is correct, sir.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Vogel, are there aspects to the VEOP Program that do not overlap with other programs dedicated entirely to veterans?

Mr. VOGEL. I am not sure that I can enumerate that. Perhaps Mr. Horton can give me a hand, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Horton.

Mr. HORTON. The operation, you know of as a veterans' office in a university is something that is an essential function, in my view, in order to get veterans paid. This program provides some supplemental funding for that.

There are schools, of course, that operate a veterans' office that receive no VEOP funding, and so in a sense there is a duplication of benefits there in that the benefit is provided by funds other than VEOP for an essential function.

Mr. SMITH. But there are some areas of need that would go unaddressed if this bill was not and this program was not reauthorized and funded again?

Mr. VOGEL. I think that the certification of veterans is going to take place whether this bill is funded or not. It is just a question of who is going to fund it, the schools or partially funded by the Federal Government.

We also have a reporting fee that goes for that function. There are a number of outreach programs going on in VA and in the military and the DOD and Labor that essentially are duplicative of this program.

Mr. SMITH. Just so I understand correctly the VA's testimony in response to the chairman's question, it is really a matter of priority. It is not a bad program. It is just not a matter of priority, in your view?

Mr. VOGEL. Yes, Mr. Smith, that is fair.

Mr. SMITH. Finally, in the bill it envisions a 2 percent administrative allowance provided. Is that sufficient?

Mr. VOGEL. If a bill would be enacted, we would be able to handle the administrative aspects with that, sir. Yes, sir.

Mr. SMITH. I appreciate that very much. Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Before yielding to Mr. Clyburn, how many people, if this is not enacted, how many people would be affected on their jobs?

Mr. VOGEL. Mr. Chairman, I do not think I could quantify that. I think that the schools will continue to do the certification function for veteran students as they do for all students, as Mr. Horton explained, but I think what likely would not or might not be done, since the Registrar's Office or the Veterans Affairs Office, however the school is organized, usually a Registrar's Office, those monies that would be used under this bill for outreach and whatnot, it would have to be borne by the schools but for the bill likely would not be done, but I do not think I could quantify the direct effect in the absence of the bill.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. I am told that over 500 schools have the VEOP Program. So it certainly would be over 500 persons in this program would be affected. Would that be a good figure?

Mr. VOGEL. That would be a bottom line figure, I would believe, sir. That would be the floor. It would be a number higher than that.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. CLYBURN. I just had one clarifying question, if I may.

Did I understand that the school, institution of higher learning, would have to have a veterans' office or officer in order to participate? Could they just designate somebody?

Mr. VOGEL. Yes, Mr. Clyburn. Usually they do designate somebody who does veterans' work, in addition to other administrative and registrar type responsibilities at the school. I think in the heyday of the Vietnam era GI bill, a lot of schools had one, two, three people who were devoted entirely to veterans' issues and veteran certifications simply because of the volume, the high numbers of veterans enrolled in the schools.

The numbers are down now from what they had been. So it is usually a shared function.

Mr. CLYBURN. Very good. Thank you.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Would the gentleman like to recognize Mr. Penny because he was one of the key authors of the Uniformed Service Re- employment Rights Act, which we have reported to the full committee? But for the record, I would like to have the gentleman make any comments on the bill that he was vitally interested in putting together.

Mr. PENNY. Mr. Chairman, just to indicate my appreciation for your quick and enthusiastic action on that legislation, it is vital. We worked closely, all of us on the committee, in developing the legislation, and I appreciate your leadership in that regard.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Thank you.

Chris Smith is going to be with us a couple more hours, and then he is moving over to another subcommittee. I thought you might like to know that.

Does the gentleman from New York have any comment?

Mr. QUINN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just a quick question in terms of the chairman asked about the number of jobs this will affect. Any sense for the number of veterans?

Part of the testimony says it would reach a fairly insignificant number of veterans. Can you judge how many will be affected by this?

Mr. HORTON. It's difficult to quantify that kind of a figure. This money, and you might clarify this when Ms. Bagley testifies, but this money, I think, very rarely in any institution rises to the level of supporting a full-time employee. It is generally supplemental money that they get, and to that extent, they perhaps do additional things other than certification that they might not otherwise be doing, but veterans that are not reached in the certification process do not get paid until they go to VA or they go somewhere else.

So somewhere along the line, the nexus has to occur there in order for them to get their benefits.

Mr. QUINN. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Thank you.

Bob Clement of Tennessee.

Mr. CLEMENT. Thank you, Mr. Vogel.

If we had a draft versus all volunteer force like we have now, would you feel differently about the VEOP Program, about whether it should be continued or not?

Mr. VOGEL. I do not think I have a different view on it in the case of somebody drafted versus somebody that volunteered. This is a post-service measure that would treat draftees and volunteers on the same basis. They are veterans when they are discharged and are eligible for educational benefits, and we mean for veterans to use them in educational readjustment, in reassimilation into the civilian workforce.

I do not think there would be a difference.

Mr. CLEMENT. But wouldn't you say during the draft, you would probably lower those standards in order to get more into the military than you would when you have an all volunteer force? I mean wouldn't the standards change probably?

Mr. VOGEL. Do you mean the standards of——

Mr. CLEMENT. The standards of those you accept into the military.

Mr. VOGEL. The past experience in Vietnam was that the need for soldiers and Marines and airmen and sailors was so great that the conscripts had lower educational levels than they do today. Clearly, I think today 95 or greater percent of all people enlisted who volunteer are high school graduates or better.

Mr. CLEMENT. Well, for example——

Mr. VOGEL. I think that number was under 45 percent in World War II, and in the 50 percent range during Korea, and when I was in during Vietnam, it was at about 70 percent, I think.

Mr. CLEMENT. Well, Lieutenant Calley, for example, under normal circumstances, he would have never been an officer, but during the Vietnam War, they needed officers so badly, a lot of

people were promoted within the ranks that otherwise would have never been an officer.

Mr. VOGEL. Yes, sir.

Mr. CLEMENT. And what I am saying is that the standards may have something to do with whether you want to move forward with the VEOP program because, you know, increasing the standards like the military has over the years, that they have got more education and more talent and skill level. Therefore, they can get a lot of the information on their own or dig it out.

As we all know, there is a pretty good exit program in place now in the military prior to getting out of the military about opportunities available to veterans.

Mr. VOGEL. During the years that we administered what is known as Chapter 34, the large Vietnam era GI bill, quite a number of the veterans who participated in that immediately after separation were in remedial or GED programs to get their high school diplomas and remedial education programs to equip them and prepare them for enrollment in institutions of higher learning, and that was a lot of the outreach in those days, directed towards educationally disadvantaged veterans.

We do not have educationally disadvantaged veterans in any great numbers coming off active duty today. They are rather well equipped to pursue postsecondary education, whether at an institution of higher learning or a technical or trade school.

Mr. CLEMENT. What are these people doing now that are at these colleges and universities? I know the number has been mentioned, 500 colleges and universities that have a VEOP program. Are they busy all day? Are they active, or do they have additional duties that are assigned to them by the university?

Why I ask you that, I am a former college president before I became a U.S. Congressman, and I know various people that have been assigned to my university in the past, and we were pleased to have them. Also we were pleased that we could utilize them for other services, other than why they were placed there.

Mr. VOGEL. My knowledge of it is that at a typical Registrar's Office, there are veterans' offices. They have a sufficient amount of work to do just for veterans that would justify one, two, three or more individuals. Now I think it is pretty safe to say that individuals involved in veterans' certifications and enrollments are involved in enrollments and certifications of other students and probably wear many hats. These are shared. They have responsibilities specifically with respect to students in VA, and they likely would have many, many other duties as well.

I think they are fairly busy people. That has been my experience. They have many and sundry functions to perform in the Registrar's Office.

Mr. CLEMENT. Over and above what they do for the VEOP Program?

Mr. VOGEL. Yes, sir.

Mr. CLEMENT. Yes, okay. Thank you.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Thank you, Mr. Slattery.

Mr.SLATTERY. No questions.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. If there are no further questions, we would like to thank you for being here today, all three witnesses, and thank you very much for your testimony.

Mr. VOGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. The chair would like to ask our next panel to come forward, Ms. Bagley, Mr. Buckley, Mr. Manhan, Mr. Brinck. If you will come forward, we will get started.

We are probably going to have a vote on the journal on the House floor. We will get started, and then I would ask Mr. Clement when we come back if he will take the chair.

We will start with Ms. Bagley. Each one might tell who they are and your interest.

STATEMENTS OF VERA L. BAGLEY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS; BENJAMIN C. BUCKLEY, SERVICEMEMBERS OPPORTUNITY COLLEGES; BOB MANHAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES; AND MICHAEL F. BRINCK, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, AMVETS

STATEMENT OF VERA L. BAGLEY

Ms. BAGLEY. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am here today representing two constituencies. One is the National Association of Veterans Program Administrators, whose formal testimony I believe you have copies of, and the other is that whole body out there of VA certifying officials who work on college campuses throughout the country.

I am a certifying official and can speak from that perspective.

Since 1986, appropriations for the current VEOP have ranged from a high of $3 million in 1987 to a low of $2,700,000 in 1992, with an average grant size of $5,284 to any one individual last year. That rather small amount of money carries an important message, as far as we are concerned, to the administrations on many campuses who suffer from the impression that VA educational programs are all but extinct.

These individuals remember the days immediately after the Vietnam conflict when their campuses saw thousands of veterans demanding services, and as a result of this comparison, they do tend now to attach VA services to someone's job description, either in the Registrar's Office or the Financial Aid Office, almost as an afterthought.

I, for example, am a Director of Admissions, Registrar, and veterans' certifying official, and we have 500 veterans certified this semester.

Today's veteran student population admittedly is smaller and less vocal. However, extinct is hardly the case since nearly 400,000 persons used their benefits in 1992, and the number is growing partly as a result of the military down-sizing, partly because of the popularity of the Montgomery GI Bill.

Institutions must be reminded of this population and encouraged to offer the services they need. The VEOP Program has done just

that in the past because it is required that the schools put a matching amount forward to support an Office of Veterans Affairs.

When an institution is approved for the education of veterans and agrees to have a veteran certifying official, such as myself, it agrees to do a variety of things aimed at protecting the government from misuse of funds. Nothing is mentioned about helping the individual veteran know, understand, abide by the regulations which exist, and it is this kind of up-front counseling which is a primary function of the Veterans Affairs Office.

VEOP funding currently helps staff those offices, persons beyond myself who are there to help the veterans on a daily basis. VA office staff provide outreach both by having a visible, accessible office on campus, not one hidden back in a corner somewhere, and by meeting with veterans wherever they are to discuss educational benefits, academic plans, and special assistance that they might need before they can progress toward higher education.

We make visits to military bases and Reserve units. We do presentations to various veteran service organizations, for example. We have cooperative ventures with such groups as DANTES, the Servicepersons Opportunity College, the American Council on Education, all contributing to the timely dissemination of information.

Still other offices do direct mailing to recently discharged veterans just to let them know what services are available from that institution whether they enroll or not, but since very few institutions give money for outreach to their VA Offices, it is the VEOP grant which has historically made any of these efforts possible at all.

The other major components of this bill, counseling, referral and support services, are also critically important. The Commission to Assess VA Education Policy strongly recommended up-front counseling for veterans preparing to use their benefits. This was in spite of the fact that the veterans undoubtedly, through the TAP Programs, are told at the time of discharge about all the support services and benefits available to them through the Department of Veterans Affairs should they experience personal, financial, vocational problems in the future.

The difficulty for the veteran lies in remembering all that information when they need it several years later. Similarly, the veteran student also has access to whatever services the institution offers, provided he is aware of the services, knows how to request those services, and, more than that, can actually find them on a large campus.

If an Office of Veterans Affairs exists, many of these problems are resolved because what better place than this one office, which is thoroughly familiar with both VA and institutional resources, to deliver that initial counseling. Its staff can offer academic advisement on the spot, immediate assistance with other kinds of problems, or an appropriate referral, with personal help in making the contact with the helping office or agency.

I cannot stress how difficult it is for an adult student sometimes to cope with the pressures of life, in general, the regulations that they are trying to abide by through the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the regulations that the institution has given them.

I would never presume to tell you that few veterans will continue to be well served if H.R. 996 fails. I can tell you, though, that its

passage may mean the difference between mere collection of paperwork and the presence of someone specifically available to help with course selection and planning. It may mean the difference between veterans attempting to navigate the system alone when benefit problems arise and the presence of an advocate to offer advice and help. It may mean an office of which actively seeks out veterans in the area and which is open at times convenient to them versus only open a limited number of hours for those who happen to come in. In short, H.R. 996 means depth and quality of service.

The Federal Government has already made a significant monetary commitment to VA benefits and to readjustment services, and it has also made many significant investments in programs at colleges and universities, not to mention those available through the VA. Doesn't it make sense now to invest a relatively small amount to continue one of these very cost effective programs, one that makes it possible for veterans to use their benefits more successfully, enhances the likelihood of appropriate, timely referrals, and fosters easier access to support service needed for a successful educational outcome?

The passage of this bill will close the loop once and for all, and we urge you to give it your full support.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bagley appears on p. 29.]

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Thank you very much, Ms. Bagley. Staff tells me over the years that you have been very helpful in working with this program and have given us good advice, and we will hear from our other witnesses.

We will now declare a recess to go make this vote in the House.

(Recess.)

Mr. CLEMENT (presiding). I suspect that we can all get started if it is okay.

Just before we recessed for the vote, I think Ms. Bagley had just finished her testimony. If there are any questions for Ms. Bagley, I do not have any.

(No response.)

Mr. CLEMENT. If not, we will now hear from Mr. Buckley.

STATEMENT OF BENJAMIN C. BUCKLEY

Mr. BUCKLEY. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, on behalf of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges, I am pleased to be here this morning.

I work for Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges. I am a veteran myself, and I am the Director of the Army's Concurrent Admissions Program.

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges, a consortium of over 1,000 colleges and universities that is sponsored by the major Higher Education Associations, strongly supports passage of H.R. 996.

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges was created in 1973 to marshal the resources of the academic community to support the education of servicemembers. A set of principles and criteria were established to insure that participating colleges and universities recognized the military person as a unique national resource that brings maturity and a considerable body of knowledge to academia.

The success of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges with the education of active duty servicemembers has been remarkable. Tens of thousands of servicemembers are engaged in degree programs. The services and the colleges dealing directly with servicemembers provide counseling and support that is directly related to this success.

But it is far more difficult to insure that veterans maximize their educational opportunity and potential. They become dispersed and somewhat disconnected from the learning experiences they had on active duty, and they are less able to bring those experiences to bear on their continued education.

Veterans need counseling to help insure that they are making the most of the educational opportunity that the previous GI bill funds and experience can yield. It is important that this is knowledgeable counseling, well informed about the skills and abilities gained on active duty, and targeted at the educational needs of veterans.

There is no better place to get this counseling than at the institution of the veteran's choice. Because the counselors will be funded by the academic institution, as well as by monies provided by this bill, Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges believes that relevant, meaningful counseling that takes into account both the institution's requirements and the veteran's capacities and needs will result.

There needs to be an aggressive outreach of the academic community to the services in order to insure that adequate information on educational opportunity is communicated to separating servicemembers as early as possible in the transition process.

This outreach function is one that can be served by veterans' counselors on the nation's college campuses, and many of the counselors will exist only if funding is made available by this bill.

The military of the future requires soldiers, sailors and airmen with the capacity for college work. Recruiting has recognized this fact, and today's servicemembers are more capable of going to college and as veterans increasingly likely to do so.

Veterans who enlisted since 1985 and are eligible for Montgomery GI Bill benefits are using those benefits in greater numbers. Nearly 100,000 soldiers and sailors on active duty today are enrolled in 2-year and 4-year degree programs, with colleges and universities that are members of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges, and many will leave the service with their academic work incomplete and will seek to enroll in college at their new residences.

All soldiers who enlist in the Army and the Army Reserve today are encouraged by their recruiters at the time of enlistment to apply to one of the 841 colleges participating in the Army's concurrent admissions program. These 841 colleges are rather evenly divided between 2-year and 4-year institutions and include 43 of the historic black colleges.

There are two goals to this program. One is to help the Army enlist college capable soldiers who are postponing their decision to enter a college, and, two, to increase the enrollment of Army veterans. The Army and the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard want to get every soldier they enlist enrolled in college at

the time of enlistment, and the expectation is that veterans will transition directly from their active duty service to college.

A new program encourages servicemembers desiring to become teachers by integrating teacher training courses into degree programs offered at military education centers. These programs will encourage additional thousands of veterans to enroll in college.

A great deal needs to be done to insure that the nation's veterans get the most out of their GI bill entitlement, and that the colleges and universities appropriately recognize and integrate the learning experiences of veterans into their education.

We do well with active duty servicemembers because programs and counseling are in place and focused to get the job done. We need to do much better with those who leave the service and become veterans, and one step that can be taken quickly and relatively cheaply is to pass H.R. 996.

For this reason Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges strongly supports this bill.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Buckley appears on p. 35.]

Mr. CLEMENT. Thank you, Mr. Buckley.

I have one question, Mr. Buckley. In view of deficit reductions and all the talk about cutting and reduced expenditures, what is it about the VEOP Program would you say that makes it deserving of funding?

Mr. BUCKLEY. As Director of the Concurrent Admissions Program, these 841 colleges, a number which grows every week, we have a point of contact at each one of these colleges, and probably 40 percent of these points of contact are veterans program administrators, and these are the people who day in and day out are the ones who counsel veterans on their benefits.

When a veteran enrolls in a college, they see their veterans program administrator, and it is that person who verifies the courses they take and passes that information along to the VA.

I think they are the key people at these institutions for veterans.

Mr. CLEMENT. Do you think you could make a strong case for us, if we ask you to submit this to us at a later date, a statement backed up by some facts that would make this program congruent with the President's investment in human needs?

Mr. BUCKLEY. Yes, I would be pleased to do that. In fact, the Army will enlist this year just for active duty around 78,000 young men and women. Twenty-nine percent will be minority. All Army enlistees today are high school diploma graduates. They score well on their exams. Ninety-six percent have signed up for the Montgomery GI Bill benefit.

Mr. CLEMENT. I am sorry. What percentage?

Mr. BUCKLEY. Ninety-six percent of soldiers sign up for the Montgomery GI Bill.

Most soldiers, when they complete their enlistment, they leave the Army. Most soldiers return to their home area, and most soldiers go to college in their home area.

The most important recruiting incentive the Army has is the GI bill and Army College Fund. That is why soldiers enlist in the Army, followed by skill training, followed by service to country.

And as another example, in California, the Army will enlist about 7,000 active duty soldiers in California in 1993, and between the Guard and Reserve, about 6,000 Guard and Reserve soldiers, and they will have a GI bill, and Army College Fund entitlement of $146 million just for these 13,000 young people. There is this huge potential to get all of these veterans into college because they are mostly college capable, and these veterans program administrators, funded in part by the VEOP, are key to this process.

Yes, I would be please to provide some information.

Mr. CLEMENT. Just what you have said seems to be very good for me and I would hope for others who would be interested in it.

Minority Counsel.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, if I may, I have a question I would like to hold until the full panel has completed its testimony.

Mr. CLEMENT. That is quite all right.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Manhan.

STATEMENT OF BOB MANHAN

Mr. MANHAN. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. It is always a pleasure for the Veterans of Foreign Wars to appear before you.

Historically, our organization has always supported any and all efforts to assist veterans at universities and colleges throughout the United States to better understand their entitlements. However, today the Veterans of Foreign Wars does not support the thrust of H.R. 996 because we do not think it is necessary to spend $3 million throughout the secondary level education system to tell veterans about their entitlements.

In the last 3 or 4 years two significant things have happened regarding the issue under discussion. First, since 1989, we have a new veterans education entitlement program, popularly known as the Montgomery GI Bill. The significant point is that this program is front-loaded. A servicemember puts money in it while he is on active duty. He is pretty conscious of what he is going to try to get out of it, compared to the older GI education bill where the government would cut a check for you to go to school after one made a decision to go back to school.

The other most significant thing is that the 101st Congress has established a program in the Defense Authorization Act by the acronym "TAP"; Transition Assistance Program, with a parallel, Disabled Transition Assistance Program. The thrust of this is that Department of Defense is going to draw down its manpower significantly. This year alone the most conservative estimate is 400,000 active duty people. The mission of TAP and DTAP is to counsel servicemembers on all their VA benefits.

Therefore, the Veterans of Foreign Wars respectfully suggests that any and all new monies that this authorizing committee might think about requesting could better be funneled through Department of Veterans Affairs, which is one of three major federal departments to support the TAP effort.

About 6 months before a servicemember leaves active duty, he or she is to receive counseling regarding any and all VA entitlements.

The other two major departments who are participating with the VA on this is Department of Defense and the Department of Labor, with their specific employment entitlements for veterans.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Chairman, that in fiscal year 1993, last year, VA had absolutely no money authorized or appropriated for their slice of TAP. This year, the 1994 authorization does give VA, as I understand it, six and a half million dollars to do a tremendously complex, but new program.

This summarizes the VFW's position. I will be happy to answer any and all questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Manhan appears on p. 37.]

Mr. CLEMENT. Thank you very much. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL F. BRINCK

Mr. BRINCK. Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks for requesting AMVETS' views on H.R. 996, and I guess that we are in a rare disagreement with our colleagues from the VFW in that we support the bill.

Currently there are over 3,500 4-year and 2-year schools, but only 513 of them with a total veteran population of about 170,000 participate in VEOP. We think we should increase that participation because VA estimates that over 474,000 veterans will use their VA education programs next year, and that number will steadily increase over the next several years to, I believe, over 600,000 per year.

With only a third of the student veterans having access to on-campus outreach, AMVETS feels the VA should adopt a policy that would encourage more institutions to aggressively recruit veterans for their student body and to provide outreach services, and we are really glad to hear about the Opportunity College program that is going on.

VA should point out that schools with large numbers of veterans can benefit as a result of the lower level of in-house financial assistance because of the assistance offered through the GI bill.

VA should highlight the wide variety of ideas and experiences that veterans have to offer their fellow students, and I might say that veterans offer the ability to have a student body with at least a smaller amount of maturity than what would be found from those who normally just enter directly through high school.

We would also like to suggest some changes to the bill to enhance the incentives for schools to actively recruit veterans. Section B(1)(a) and (b) should be changed to include all honorably discharged veterans attending the institution and determining eligibility for participation in the program, not just those eligible for VA benefits.

First, this will enable more schools, especially the smaller ones, to qualify for veterans outreach assistance, even if only as a member of a consortium. The veterans outreach is a function many of these schools simply cannot afford without VEOP, and veterans must not be penalized because they choose to attend a small school.

Second, this is an ideal opportunity to provide gateway services at very low cost.

I agree with a portion of what Mr. Manhan has just said. TAP is certainly an important program these days, but I would suggest the VEOP could be considered or looked at as a part of the TAP program in that it is really a follow-up on what has been presented to the veteran as they exit the service.

Next, to encourage small schools to provide outreach, AMVETS suggests additional grants for outreach employees for qualifying institutions with enrollments of less than 3,000. We also suggest that the VA work-study recipients receive first consideration when staffing VEOP offices as a way to reduce staff costs.

Based on the total number of veterans using VA educational benefits and the cost effectiveness of outreach, we suggest Congress provide about $6 million in additional funding to the VA, additional funding, to support VEOP.

As with any entitlement, AMVETS' national resolutions strongly support funding this entitlement through mandatory spending accounts.

Finally, AMVETS suggests periodic oversight by this committee to assure VA's active and enthusiastic participation and promotion of the outreach program. At a minimum, in addition to receiving periodic reports, VA should be required to provide all participating institutions with a complete library of publications on VA benefit programs and a VA benefits counselor hotline. VA should also require that at least one full-time employee subsidized under the grant program be trained at the VA Academy in Baltimore in the delivery of veterans benefits.

Mr. Chairman, AMVETS thanks you and the committee for your pro active stance on veterans education, and that concludes my statement.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Brinck appears on p. 39.]

Mr. CLEMENT. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Brinck.

Other members of the panel thank you all very much for your testimony this morning. I would hope at this time you all will be able to answer any questions which may come from us here.

You may start.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Whether VEOP has a high enough priority to warrant the expenditure of $3 million a year in a time of severely constrained budgets seems to be the most significant question about the program. VA and the VFW assert that VEOP would essentially duplicate other programs, such as TAP, DTAP, and the Upward Bound Program.

Would you please tell this subcommittee why you agree or disagree? I think the question now is directed to Ms. Bagley or Mr. Buckley because Mr. Brinck has already touched on it in his response to another question.

Ms. BAGLEY. I guess in an ideal world there would be duplication, and we would not be having this conversation. The problem with TAP and DTAP is not what it does. It is when it does it.

The veterans who arrive on my campus typically have been out of the service for a couple of years or more. They just do not remember what they were told or even if they were told about how to access the services.

They also are extremely defensive about coming into an institution of higher education older than the typical student, even though they really are not. There is nothing anywhere that I know of that refreshes their memory about the benefits to them unless they take their own initiative to go to the nearest regional office, which in some of the western states is hundreds of miles away. You know, it is better around here. They almost have to go to the institution, and if there is no one there trained to know what the VA services are, that does not have any clue as to what those people were told in their out-processing, it is a pretty messy situation, and a very bold individual who manages to make it through and get what they are looking for.

Outreach I do not believe is a duplicate at all in terms of going into the community and trying to find the veterans, to remind them that the benefit is there and that it does not last forever, and I guess in that sense I have a little bit of difficulty in seeing it as a duplication of effort, simply because of the timing and because of the reality of the world that these veterans come back to.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Buckley, do you have anything to add to that?

Mr. BUCKLEY. Yes. It is true that the parting servicemen are counseled on their benefits as veterans. It is done normally 4 to 6 months prior to discharge. The Army does it at their education centers and call it education transition counseling, and the counseling consists of this: what are your long-term and short-term education plans and goals? And then as a part of that will be their benefits as veterans.

As soldiers leave the service, all the services—I will say soldiers—leave the service at their discharge point, they get this again, but every briefing they get is done in 1 day at a discharge point.

Sixty-five percent of veterans who ever do use their education benefits do so within 2 years of discharge. So many, or as Ms. Bagley said, do not transition directly from active duty to college. There is a gap in between, and the only person who can glue all of this information together for the veteran arriving on campus is the veterans program administrator or the person who is working to advise veterans.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Manhan, do you wish any rebuttal?

Mr. MANHAN. No rebuttal sir, but I respectfully suggest that any college or university is really a business. As such it sells a package of goods and services called "education." Therefore, academia is motivated by profit, and a university or college has a certain core staff of persons who must and should advise and counsel students not only about their grades and deportment, but how to insure that these students—and they come in all packages—are receiving their academic monies, whether it is from a Chase Manhattan student loan or if it is from a PELL grant or if it is Daddy and Mommy sending a check or from any level of government, to include using VA monies.

Therefore, I should think that this financial counseling must be done by those colleges and universities just to remain competitive. It pays them to fill each and every seat because they already have someone teaching any given class. Therefore, it is primarily prudent to fill the classroom.

This is the VFW's position and we offer it as something to round out this very important discussion.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, sir.

Mr. CLEMENT. I do not have any other questions.

Well, let me thank all of you for participating as witnesses this morning. This has been a very constructive and informative, I might add, and we appreciate your having been here with us, and thank you so much.

[Whereupon, at 10:54 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, subject to the call of the chair.]

APPENDIX

103D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 996

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a veterans education certification and outreach program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 18, 1993

Mr. MONTGOMERY (for himself and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a veterans education certification and outreach program.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. VETERANS EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end of subchapter II the following new section:

"§ 3697B. Veterans education outreach program

"(a) The Secretary shall provide funding for offices of veterans affairs at institutions of higher learning, as defined in section 3452(f), in accordance with this section.

"(b)(1)(A) The Secretary shall, subject to the availability of appropriations, make payments to any institution of higher learning, under and in accordance with this section, during any fiscal year if the number of persons eligible for services from offices assisted under this section at the institution is at least 50, determined in the same manner as the number of eligible veterans or eligible persons is determined under section 3684(c).

"(B) The persons who are eligible for services from the offices assisted under this section are persons receiving educational assistance administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, including assistance provided under chapter 106 of title 10.

"(2) To be eligible for a payment under this section, an institution of higher learning or a consortium of institutions of higher learning, as described in paragraph (3), shall make an application to the Secretary. The application shall—

"(A) set forth such policies, assurances, and procedures that will ensure that—

"(i) the funds received by the institution, or each institution in a consortium of institutions described in paragraph (3), under this section will be used solely to carry out this section;

"(ii) for enhancing the functions of its veterans education outreach program, the applicant will expend, during the academic year for which a payment is sought, an amount equal to at least the amount of the award under this section from sources other than this or any other Federal program; and

"(iii) the applicant will submit to the Secretary such reports as the Secretary may require or as are required by this section;

"(B) contain such other statement of policies, assurances, and procedures as the Secretary may require in order to protect the financial interests of the United States;

"(C) set forth such plans, policies, assurances, and procedures as will ensure that the applicant will maintain an office of veterans' affairs which has responsibility for—

"(i) veterans' certification, outreach, recruitment, and special education programs, including the provision of or referral to educational, vocational, and personal counseling for veterans; and

"(ii) providing information regarding other services provided veterans by the Department,

including the readjustment counseling program authorized under section 1712A, the programs of veterans employment and training authorized under the Job Training Partnership Act and the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act of 1992, and the programs carried out under chapters 41 and 42; and

"(D) be submitted at such time or times, in such manner, in such form, and contain such information as the Secretary determines necessary to carry out the functions of the Secretary under this section.

"(3) An institution of higher learning which is eligible for funding under this section and which the Secretary determines cannot feasibly carry out, by itself, any or all of the activities set forth in paragraph (2)(C), may carry out such program or programs through a consortium agreement with one or more other institutions of higher learning in the same community.

"(4) The Secretary shall not approve an application under this subsection unless the Secretary determines that the applicant will implement the requirements of paragraph (2)(C) within the first academic year during which it receives a payment under this section.

"(5) Any institution which received funding under section 420A of the Higher Education Act of 1965 during fiscal year 1993 shall be eligible under this section for fiscal year 1994.

"(c)(1)(A) Subject to subparagraph (B), the amount of the payment which any institution shall receive under this section for any fiscal year shall be $100 for each person who is described in subsection (b)(1)(B).

"(B) The maximum amount of payments to any institution of higher learning, or any branch thereof which is located in a community which is different from that in which the parent institution thereof is located, in any fiscal year is $75,000.

"(2)(A) The Secretary shall pay to each institution of higher learning which has had an application approved under subsection (b) the amount which it is to receive under this section. If the amount appropriated for any fiscal year is not sufficient to pay the amounts which all such institutions are to receive, the Secretary shall ratably reduce such payments. If any amount becomes available to carry out this section for a fiscal year after such reductions have been imposed, such reduced payments shall be increased on the same basis as they were reduced.

"(B) In making payments under this section for any fiscal year, the Secretary shall apportion the appropriation

for making such payments, from funds which become available as a result of the limitation on payments set forth in paragraph (1)(B), in an equitable manner.

"(d) The Secretary, in carrying out the provisions of this section, shall seek to assure the coordination of programs assisted under this section with other programs carried out by the Department pursuant to this title, and the Secretary shall provide all assistance, technical consultation, and information otherwise authorized by law as necessary to promote the maximum effectiveness of the activities and programs assisted under this section.

"(e)(1) From the amounts made available for any fiscal year under subsection (f), the Secretary shall retain one percent or $10,000, whichever is less, for the purpose of collecting information about exemplary veterans educational outreach programs and disseminating that information to other institutions of higher learning having such programs on their campuses. Such collection and dissemination shall be done on an annual basis.

"(2) From the amounts made available under subsection (f), the Secretary may retain not more than two percent for the purpose of administering this section.

"(f) Out of amounts made available for the payment of readjustment benefits for each fiscal year beginning

after September 30, 1993, $3,000,000 shall be made available to carry out this section.".

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3697A the following new item:

"3697B. Veterans education outreach program.".

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STATEMENT OF R. J. VOGEL
DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR BENEFITS
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

March 25, 1993

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee to provide the views of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on H. R. 996, a bill to establish a veterans' education certification and outreach program.

In essence, this measure would reauthorize the Veterans' Education Outreach Program (VEOP) that was repealed at the end of the last congressional session, except that the bill would make our Department, rather than the Department of Education, responsible for program administration.

While the VEOP has been a positive program, it is not an absolutely necessary program. In view of this, and considering current budgetary needs and constraints, VA cannot support enactment of this measure.

Under this legislation, the VEOP office of veterans affairs at each institution would be responsible for veterans' certification, outreach, recruitment, and special education programs. Such programs would include providing eligible individuals with, or referral to, counseling and providing information on services, such as the readjustment counseling program, job training under the Job Training Partnership Act and the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act of 1992. Additionally, the office would be responsible for providing information on the employment and training programs carried out by the Department of Labor under chapters 41 and 42 of title

38, United States Code. If VA determines that an IHL cannot carry out these services by itself, the institution may enter into a consortium agreement with other IHLs within the same community.

Mr. Chairman, H. R. 996 provides that any institution receiving funding during Fiscal Year 1993 under section 420A of the Higher Education Act of 1965, having 50 or more veterans (including members of the Selected Reserve) and eligible persons who are in receipt of educational assistance, would be eligible to subsequently receive the VA grant monies made available by this legislation. The funds received would be used solely to carry out the purposes of this program and would be enhanced with matching funds from the recipient IHL during the academic year for which the award would be given.

Such an institution would receive $100 for each person eligible for services, with the maximum payment to any IHL being $75,000 in a fiscal year. If the amount appropriated for any fiscal year would not be sufficient to pay the amounts which all such institutions were to receive, the VA would ratably reduce such payments. In the event that funding to carry out the VEOP's mission subsequently became available for a fiscal year after such reductions had been imposed, the grant payments would be increased on the same basis as they were reduced.

The bill would authorize that, effective September 30, 1993, and each fiscal year thereafter, $3 million be made available from the VA's Readjustment Benefits Account to establish and maintain the VEOP. Two percent of that amount could be retained by the Department for purposes of administering the program. VA would also be allowed to retain 1 percent of the $3 million authorized for the VEOP or $10,000, whichever is less, to collect information about exemplary veterans' outreach programs and disseminate that information on an annual basis for the benefit of offices of veterans affairs at other IHLs.

Mr. Chairman, as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs indicated in response to a question on this reauthorization issue during his confirmation process, while he would encourage schools to continue to recruit and assist veterans in reaching educational and training objectives, he believes that the need for a formal program like VEOP to promote and fund such functions clearly has diminished.

Historically, the VEOP was established in place of the Veterans' Cost-of-Instruction Program (VCIP) authorized under the Higher Education Amendments of 1972, and also administered by the Department of Education. The VCIP was an incentive grant program, providing payments to an educational institution if that institution had increased veteran enrollments or established special programs for veterans, including recruitment, outreach, and remedial and tutorial assistance. Participating schools had to show a 10 percent increase in veterans enrolled in the first year and a 5 percent increase in each successive year.

By the mid-1980's, with a declining number of educationally disadvantaged veterans leaving active duty and with the accompanying existence of special programs for such persons lapsing, factors underlying the need for the VCIP grant had materially changed. Consequently, in enacting the Higher Education Amendments of 1986, Public Law 92-318, Congress replaced the VCIP with VEOP, a program designed to enhance veterans' outreach and recruitment activities, counseling and tutorial services, as well as special programs for disadvantaged veterans.

The VEOP recently was repealed by Public Law 102-325, the Higher Education Act of 1965 Reauthorization Act, signed on July 23, 1992. By that point, the need for the program had been materially reduced. Many of the same functions were being performed through student support services for enrolled students

and veterans upward bound projects under the Upward Bound Program that specifically targeted veterans.

Moreover, Mr. Chairman, we note that the veterans' education outreach function to be continued by the VEOP under this bill would, in large measure, be duplicative of the broad range of outreach and transition assistance activities being provided by VA in conjunction with the Departments of Defense and Labor and the ongoing outreach efforts by Veterans Benefits Administration field stations with their veterans groups and with school officials. This includes providing information about the educational assistance available to veterans and the education counseling which is available through VA.

We would also emphasize that veterans leaving military service today are different from the veterans who left the service just a few years ago. Most veterans separating from active duty today participated in their GI Bill. That is, they either contributed or had their military pay reduced in order to qualify for benefits. Because they contributed, veterans are more aware of their entitlement and how they plan to use it. Further, member participation requires that the Service Departments play an active role in counseling such members regarding current and post-military education entitlement. In addition, there are far fewer educationally disadvantaged veterans leaving active duty. In fact, the law requires that members complete high school to qualify for the Montgomery GI Bill.

Considering the qualifications and needs of current veterans and the availability of other programs of outreach and assistance discussed above, and further noting that, during the last year of operation, the VEOP funded 525 institutions, providing to each on average only $5,143, it appears clear that the VEOP has lost significance as a vehicle for promoting the purposes for which it originally was established.

In sum, the VEOP has been beneficial to a limited segment of veterans and the educational community, but has been superseded by more comprehensive programs of outreach and assistance for veterans.

Thus, the restoration of the VEOP program would be of insignificant augmental benefit and, in view of other budgetary needs, not merited at this time.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I will be pleased to answer any questions you or the other members of the Subcommittee may nave.

Testimony of

National Association of Veterans

Program Administrators

NAVPA

for

HR 996

Veterans Education Certification and Outreach Program

(VECOP)

March 25, 1993

334 Cannon House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

67-475 O - 93 - 3

Mr. Chairman and members of this Committee, on behalf of the National Association of Veterans Program Administrators (NAVPA), I wish to thank you for the opportunity to testify on HR 996.

The Veterans Education Certification and Outreach Program has assisted institutions of higher learning across America to provide the education and training to those persons who chose to serve their country and participated in the Montgomery GI Bill.

Originally, the program was initiated in the Department of Education under the Higher Education Act of 1965 as the Veterans Cost-of-Instruction Payments program (VCIP) which later was renamed the Veterans Education Outreach Program (VEOP). Approximately 500 eligible institutions of higher learning have been recipients of these awards.

These funds provide support services for the educational needs of veterans. Funded projects are designed to assist Offices of Veterans Affairs on campuses to provide outreach and recruitment activities, counseling, tutorial services, and special programs for disabled veterans. Instruction through personal counseling can make appropriate referrals including the readjustment counseling program, the program of veterans employment and training and various other programs available to veterans.

VECOP funds also provide support staff, newsletters on current legislation, academic information, handbooks for veterans providing academic and veterans educational information and referral services.

This program also permits educational institutions to provide services to military establishments. For instance, schools utilize mailing lists of recently discharged veterans, periodic visits to military bases and reserve units to answer questions and assist in their enrollment process.

The Montgomery GI Bill has been successful in attracting trainees to the military. The enrollment rate overall since inception is 78.5% with the enrollment rate for FY 1992 at 86.7%. The cumulative usage rate since inception stands at 34.76% up from 27.75% in FY 1991. Obviously, many trainees have begun to use their veterans educational benefits. The actual education trainees for all programs for 1992 excluding Chapter 31 (vocational rehabilitation) number 397,400. Projected number of trainees will increase annually to approximately 623,167 by FY 1998. With additional military downsizing, this could increase substantially. Statistics were provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs data as of December 31, 1992.

With a near doubling of veterans attending classes on campuses this confirms the necessity of providing services to this population by maintaining a veterans office on college campuses.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has realized the importance of maintaining a visible office to assist veterans in the transition from military to civilian status and to ensure these persons have equal access to the educational opportunities the enlistment provides.

HR 996 provides the assurance that educational institutions with at least 50 enrolled veterans using their educational benefits, can maintain a veterans office. Services will be provided to all persons receiving educational assistance administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs including assistance provided under Chapter 106 of title 10. Educational institutions are required to expend an amount equal to at least the amount of the award. This will ensure continuation of a visible veterans office on college campuses.

Institutions of higher learning both public and private are experiencing serious financial problems. They have had to consolidate, eliminate and, reduce classes in order to meet the demand and stay operational.

Qualified admissions poses problems for many veterans. These persons who choose the military, either for the educational benefits or a career must compete with the high school graduate who has the current preparatory skills to succeed in a degree program. The institutional veterans office helps the veteran apply for admission, address transfer and military credits, advise on entry testing such as ACT, SAT, institutional testing, serves as academic advisors, explains enrollment and fee process, tutorial assistance, and other financial aid to name a few services. The veterans office serves to resolve and interpret problems. The institutional veterans office provides the procedures and assurance the veteran needs to realize his or her potential by providing accurate certification, monitoring academic progress, counseling and encouragement for the veteran to achieve his or her goal.

This program has proved to be one of the most cost effective programs for the services provided to a population group that is not served by any other entity.

The retention of a portion of the funds for exemplary programs provides an additional incentive for institutions to develop superior veterans education certification and outreach programs and to disseminate this information to other institutions of higher learning on an annual basis.

I want you to take a moment to think. What $3,000,000 reaches more individuals, more institutions, helps more veterans become contributing members of the American society than the Veterans Education Certification and Outreach Program. We need to keep this small program to continue this investment in our veterans future endeavors.

If this program ceases to exist most veterans offices will vanish from college campuses. The inability of untrained persons to administer the veterans education benefit programs, each with its own unique requirement, would not only frustrate veterans causing them to drop out, but create substantial overpayment which in turn could become more costly.

By continued support for the institutional veterans offices, the services provided by VECOP will assure campuses can serve the additional numbers of veterans anticipated to take advantage of veterans educational benefits in the future.

The Honorable "Sonny" Montgomery and the Department of Veterans Affairs has recognized the need, the value and has provided an excellent, simple, workable program to support existing resources available to both the administration and participating eligible institutions of higher learning.

I respectfully ask each of you to evaluate the need, the cost and the benefit to the many deserving veterans and endorse this as a very workable cost effective program.

Thank you very much for your close attention to the Veterans Educational Certification and Outreach Program (VECOP).

Stand for any questions.

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges' support of H. R. 996.
House Veterans Affairs Committee Testimony
25 March, 1993

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges, a consortium of over 1,000 colleges and universities that is sponsored by the major higher education associations at the National Center for Higher Education, strongly supports the passage of H. R. 996.

The Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Consortium was created over two decades ago to marshall the resources of the academic community to support the education of servicemembers. A set of Principles and Criteria were established to ensure that participating colleges and universities recognize the military person as a unique national resource that brings maturity and a considerable body of knowledge to academe. The commitment of the college to these Principles and Criteria, and to adequate counseling and support of the servicemember-student is crucial.

The success of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges with the education of active duty servicemembers has been remarkable. Tens of thousands of servicemembers are engaged in degree programs. The Services and the colleges dealing directly with servicemembers provide counseling and support that is directly related to this success. It is possible to focus on completion of degree work, avoidance of duplication of coursework and maximization of adult education credit for learning already achieved in this structured environment.

It is far more difficult to ensure that *veterans* maximize their educational opportunity and potential. They become dispersed, and somewhat disconnected from the learning experiences they had on active duty and less able than active duty servicemembers to bring those experiences to bear upon their continued education. They attend institutions not familiar with the Principles and Criteria endorsed by the national higher education community for dealing with servicemembers. There is a concept currently being discussed, called SOCVET, which would provide a consortium dedicated to promoting veterans' education as effectively as now is being done for active duty servicemembers. Passage of H.R. 996 would be a boon to veterans' education in any case, but combined with SOCVET it would be a very strong move.

Veterans need counseling to help ensure that they are making the most of the educational opportunity that their previous experience and G. I. Bill funds can yield. It is important that this is knowledgable counseling, well-informed about the skills and abilities gained on active duty and targeted at the continuing educational needs of veterans. There is no better place to get this counseling than at the institution of the veteran's choice. Because the

counselors will be funded by the academic institution as well as by monies provided by this Bill, Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges believes that relevant, meaningful counseling that takes into account both the institution's requirements and the veteran's capacities and needs will result.

There needs to be an aggressive outreach of the academic community to the Services in order to ensure that adequate information on educational opportunity is communicated to separating servicemembers as early as possible in the transition process. This outreach function is one that can be served by veterans' counselors on the nation's college campuses. Those counselors will exist only if funding is made available by this Bill.

The military of the future requires soldiers, sailors and airmen with the capacity for college work. Recruiting has recognized this fact, and today's servicemembers are more capable of going to college and, as veterans, increasingly likely to do so. Veterans who enlisted since 1985 and are eligible for Montgomery GI Bill benefits are using those benefits in growing numbers. Nearly 100,000 soldiers and sailors on active duty today are enrolled in two and four year degree programs with colleges and universities that are members of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges. Many will leave with their academic work incomplete and will seek to enroll in colleges at at their new residences.

All soldiers enlisting in the Army and Army Reserve today are encouraged to apply for admission to one of the 841 colleges participating in the Army's Concurrent Admissions Program. There are two goals. One, to help the Army to enlist college-capable soldiers who are postponing their decision to enter college; and two, to increase college enrollment of Army veterans. The Army National Guard has recently entered this program. A new program encourages servicemembers desiring to become teachers by integrating teacher training courses into degree programs offered at military education centers. These programs will encourage additional thousands of veterans to enroll in college.

A great deal needs to be done to ensure that the nation's veterans get the most out of their G. I. Bill entitlement and that the colleges and Universities appropriately recognize and integrate the learning experiences of veterans into their education. We do well with active duty servicemembers because programs and counseling are in place and focused to get the job done. We need to do much better with those that leave the service and become veterans. One step that can be taken quickly and relatively cheaply is to pass H. R. 996. For this reason, Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges strongly supports passage of the Bill.

STATEMENT OF

BOB MANHAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WITH RESPECT TO

VETERANS EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, D.C. MARCH 25, 1993

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

Thank you for inviting the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) to participate in this important hearing. Our 2.2 million members are always interested in assuring that veterans receive all their hard earned entitlements in a timely and proper manner. Today we are asked to comment on bill H.R. 996 which proposes to establish a Veterans Education Outreach Program within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This program would provide grants to all institutions of higher education, colleges and universities, to help them support offices of veterans' affairs on campus that provide outreach, recruitment, special education services, and counseling to veterans.

This program was being executed by Department of Education (DOE) under the provisions of section 420A of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Congress withdrew the funding authority of $2.9 million in calendar year (CY) 1992 to be effective in fiscal year (FY) 1993. Hence, the outreach program is not presently funded with any federal dollars.

Based on the above facts the VFW can only conclude that the house and senate appropriation subcommittees that provide spending authority for DOE believed that because the thrust of this effort is exclusively for veterans the VA should logically be the sponsor of the program. This brings us to the purpose of today's hearing. The VFW generally supports this rationale and have historically supported the Veterans' Education Outreach Program (VEOP) that was established in the mid-1960s to assist and support Vietnam era veterans. As you recall, the atmosphere on college campuses at that time was especially hostile to the Vietnam Conflict and those who were in or were recently separated from the armed forces. The bulk of enlisted personnel at that point in time were draftees. Therefore, the VEOP served an important role that included the function of "hand-holding" or as a support group for veterans at a time when the academic environment was mixed with an unusually hostile and politically charged anti-veteran atmosphere.

Since mid-1973, which marks the official end of the Vietnam Conflict, there have been several significant changes in the veteran population and their awareness of educational entitlements. First, we had the draft system replaced by the "all volunteer force" or VOLAR force. Then, in late 1989 the major VA educational program of Chapter 34 entitled "Vietnam-Era G I Bill" expired. Some 20,000 veterans were eligible to continue their higher education by entering or "rolling over" into the current Chapter 30 educational benefit entitled "All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program", more popularly known today as the Montgomery G I. [Educational] Bills. Selected

Reservists are provided an educational entitlement in Chapter 106 of title 10, United States Code (USC) and the active duty force had their entitlement granted in the above cited Chapter 30, of title 38, USC. At about this same point in time both Department of Defense (DOD) and VA began to actively publicize these educational entitlements; the former as an enlistment incentive and the latter as a significant veteran program.

Since July 1991, or shortly after the end of the Persian Gulf War, DOD began the first stages of the ongoing draw-down of military personnel that is programmed to continue until FY 1996. This means that hundreds of thousands of active duty servicemembers will become veterans.

Fortunately, early in 1990, Congress provided the leadership and guidance to establish the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP). This is a combined effort involving the three major federal departments of defense, labor and veterans' affairs as well as the veteran service organizations (VSOs) such as the VFW.

The important point to make is that P.L. 101-510, which is the 1991 Defense Authorization Act, incorporated as a part of its chapter 58, entitled "Benefits and Services For Members Being Separated Or Recently Separated," specific guidance on counseling requirements on all VA entitlements, to include educational benefits. Therefore, based on the changing circumstances outlined above, the VFW suggests that the requested authorization in H.R. 996 of $3 million for veterans education outreach for FY 1994 could be better spent on the TAP/DTAP effort, particularly as it applies to VA entitlements. The alternative, as the VFW understands bill H.R. 996, is to have VA spend some $3 million dollars in the form of grants on college and university administrative staffers who would act as counselors at on-campus "Offices of Veterans Affairs."

The VFW would prefer that VA not fund any veterans education outreach program using college and university personnel because we feel that the present VA and DOD sponsored educational programs are already well understood by servicemembers; and that present VA and DOD advertisement and awareness effort[illegible] time of enlistment and separation from active duty are satisfactory. Furthermore, we feel that because of the rapid drawdown of military personnel, support of the existing TAP/DTAP efforts is a more effective and efficient way to ensure that veterans are aware of their educational entitlements.

This concludes the VFW's formal testimony Mr. Chairman. It will be my pleasure to respond on behalf of the VFW to any questions you or any member of this committee may have. Thank you.

SERVING
WITH
PRIDE

STATEMENT OF

MICHAEL F. BRINCK
AMVETS NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Before the

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON VETERANS EDUCATION,
TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

On

H.R. 996

Thursday, March 25, 1993
Canon House Office Building

AMVETS

NATIONAL
HEADQUARTERS
4647 Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland
20706-9961
TELEPHONE 301-459-9600
FAX 301-459-7924
FTS 8-344-3552

VEOP Testimony

Mr. Chairman, thank you for requesting AMVETS views on H.R. 996, a bill that would reauthorize and transfer the Veterans Education Outreach Program (VEOP) to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Currently, there are over 3,500 accredited two and four-year schools, but only about 513 institutions with a total veteran population of 169,081 participate in VEOP. We must increase that participation because VA estimates next year over 474,000 veterans will use VA education programs and that number will steadily increase over the next several years.

With only a third of student veterans having access to on-campus outreach, AMVETS feels VA should adopt a policy that would encourage more institutions to aggressively recruit veterans for their student body and provide outreach services. VA should point out that schools with large numbers of veterans can benefit as a result of the lower level of in-house savings in financial assistance because of GI Bill benefits. VA should highlight the wide variety of ideas and experiences that veterans have to offer their fellow students. Additionally, the presence of veterans would add at least a modicum of maturity not generally found in those who enter college directly from high school.

We would like to suggest some changes to the bill to enhance incentives for schools to actively recruit veterans. Section (b)(1)(A) and (B) should be changed to include all honorably discharged veterans attending the institution in determining eligibility for participation in the program, not just those eligible for VA education benefits. First, this will enable more schools, especially small ones, to qualify for veterans outreach assistance - even if only as a member of a consortium. Veterans outreach is a function many of these schools simply cannot afford without VEOP and veterans must not be penalized because they choose to attend small schools.

Second, this is an ideal opportunity to provide gateway service at a very low cost.

Next, to encourage small schools to provide outreach, AMVETS suggests additional grants in the amount of $10,000 per full-time veterans outreach employee (maximum of $20,000) for qualifying institutions with enrollments of less than 3,000. We also suggest that VA work-study recipients receive first consideration when staffing VEOP offices as an ideal way to reduce staff costs.

Based on the total number of veterans using VA education benefits and the cost effectiveness of outreach, we suggest Congress provide at least $6,000,000 additional funding to the VA to support VEOP. We suggest the $75 million provided for the Servicemembers' Occupational Conversion Act recently released by the administration as a source of those added funds. As with any entitlement, AMVETS national resolutions strongly support funding this entitlement through mandatory spending accounts.

AMVETS is also concerned that VA assume responsibility for the program in a manner that ensure its success. We suggest periodic oversight by this committee to ensure VA's active participation in, and promotion of the outreach program. At a minimum, in addition to receiving periodic reports on a schools outreach program, VA should provide all participating institutions with a complete library of publications on VA benefit programs and a Veterans Benefits Counselor hotline. VA should also require that at least one full time employee subsidized for under the grant program be trained in the VA Service Academy in Baltimore in the delivery of veterans benefits.

Mr. Chairman, AMVETS thanks you and the committee for you proactive stance on veterans education. That concludes our statement.

PARALYZED VETERANS
OF AMERICA
Chartered by the Congress
of the United States

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

BY

CLIFTON E. DUPREE, ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

OF THE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

CONCERNING

H.R. 996, A BILL TO AMEND TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE,

TO ESTABLISH

A VETERANS EDUCATION CERTIFICATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

MARCH 25, 1993

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) thank you for inviting us to testify today. We support H.R. 996 and we are confident that you will continue to provide the strong leadership necessary to insure a high standard of continued excellence for educational assistance programs.

Since 1944, more than 20 million men and women have trained under the various education programs administered by VA. It has been determined that recipients of these educational programs will pay up to eight times the cost of their education in federal income taxes from the added lifetime income their education made possible.

PVA strongly supports this legislative proposal that will help persons using educational benefits administered by the VA. Especially, the **Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program** under Chapter 35 takes on additional significance for the members of PVA and their families.

Under this program, educational assistance is provided to the dependents and spouses of service-connected severely disabled veterans so they can pursue an education without depleting family savings or without accumulating significant debt.

For the purpose of maintaining continuity and equality in the VA educational assistance program, PVA opposes any legislative proposal which would terminate Chapter 35, eligibility for stepchildren.

Mr. Chairman, the legislation before us today would further enhance VA educational entitlement by providing funding for offices of veterans affairs at institutions of higher learning.

These proposed veterans affairs' offices could begin during any fiscal year if the number of persons eligible for VA educational benefits was at least 50.

The veterans affairs' office would be responsible for formulating plans, policies, and procedures for veterans' certification, outreach, recruitment, and special educational programs, including referral to educational, vocational, and personal counseling for veterans.

The veterans affairs' office also will provide information on other services such as readjustment counseling programs authorized under the **Job Training Partnership Act** and the **Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act of 1992**, to include programs carried out under Chapter 41, Job Counseling, Training, and Placement Service, and Chapter 42, Employment and Training of Veterans. They will also be instrumental in assisting those Department of Defense personnel who will be utilizing their educational benefits after separating from the Armed Forces as part of the military down-sizing.

This program could further increase the large number of mandated outreach functions that the VA (through its Veterans Services Program) currently provides.

Veterans Services has the responsibility, but not the staff to provide these additional services. It is important to realize what these programs mean to separating service members. For example, at the current services level an applicant can wait up to a full semester for his or her initial educational allowance check which, in some cases, makes it necessary for the applicant to withdraw from college.

PVA believes it is imperative that individuals, who are separating from the Armed Services, be provided with the very best in counseling and factual information in order to eliminate as many barriers as possible in returning to civilian status.

Institutions of higher learning that are eligible for funding under this proposed legislation would receive $100 for each person receiving educational benefits administered by the VA, including benefits provided under Chapter 106 of title 10, United States Code.

The maximum amount of payments to any institution of higher learning in any fiscal year is $75,000. However, if the amount appropriated for any fiscal year is not sufficient to pay the amounts that all eligible institutions are to receive, the Secretary shall ratably reduce such payments.

If any appropriations become available for a fiscal year after such reductions have been imposed, such reduced payments shall be increased on the same basis as they were reduced.

The Secretary shall set aside one percent or $10,000, whichever is less, for the collection of information about campuses having exemplary veterans' educational outreach programs. This information will be made available to other institutions of higher learning. Collection and dissemination shall be done on an annual basis.

An appropriation of $3,000,000 for payment of readjustment benefits for each fiscal year, beginning after September 30, 1993, shall be made available to carry out this educational assistance program.

Over the years, providing counseling services, training, and educational opportunities to the nation's veterans and disabled veterans has proven to be a beneficial program for the government,

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the private sector, and especially for the disadvantaged individual needing assistance in education and job placement.

Mr. Chairman, your dedication to existing programs and your willingness to address new initiatives, such as H.R. 996, will continue to insure that present and future generations of veterans and their dependents will receive the best educational benefits that we, as a nation, can provide.

In conclusion, PVA looks forward to working closely with the Subcommittee and staff to secure passage of legislation that will assist beneficiaries of VA educational benefits.

BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION
477 H STREET, NORTHWEST • WASHINGTON D.C. 20001-2694 • (202) 371-8880

Testimony By the Blinded Veterans Association

To Be Submitted

For the Record of the

Education, Training and Employment Subcommittee

of the

House Veterans' Affairs Committee

March 25, 1993

CHARTERED BY THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, on behalf of the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) I want to express our appreciation for this opportunity to submit our views on H.R. 996, the Veterans Education Outreach Program (VEOP), for the record. The leadership provided by this subcommittee over the years by introducing legislative initiatives to maximize education, training and employment for our nation's veterans has been most commendable. Again, Mr. Chairman, BVA feels that by the introduction of H.R. 996 you have enhanced the opportunity for veterans to truly maximize their opportunity for successful completion of a degree in higher education.

This legislation would authorize the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to establish Offices of Veterans' Affairs at eligible institutions of higher learning and to provide services such as outreach, recruitment activities, counseling and tutorial services and special programs for disabled veterans. Additionally, the bill authorizes $3,000,000 for FY-1994.

Mr. Chairman, while we are keenly aware of the fiscal constraints under which the DVA is forced to operate as well as the need to substantially reduce the deficits, we believe the expenditure of this $3,000,000 is certainly worthwhile and is a cost effective means of ensuring quality counseling of our veterans regarding their educational entitlement as well as assisting in making the most appropriate academic choices for the individual veteran. Recognizing that the number of veterans who will be enrolling in institutions will most likely increase dramatically, due to the rapid draw down in active duty military personnel; indicating the great need for VEOP. Statistical information provided over the past several years by the Veterans' Benefits Administration (VBA) clearly points to the extreme difficulties Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Service of VBA is experiencing in meeting timeliness standards for providing initial appointments for counseling and each year delays only increase. With the expected dramatic increase in workload there can be little hope that timeliness will improve; making access to counseling more difficult than ever.

Because of the tremendous participation in the Montgomery G.I. Bill, it is reasonable to assume that most who participated will take advantage of the benefits they have earned. Undoubtedly, the Montgomery G.I. Bill may have been the recruitment tool that encouraged the individuals to enlist in the military. If these individuals are to have a reasonable opportunity to be reintegrated into society and find meaningful and productive employment, it is imperative they have every opportunity to take advantage of their educational benefits. It seems to us that the three million dollar outlay for the VEOP is certainly an investment in our future.

BVA is aware of great efforts that are currently underway by DoD and DVA; namely the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) and the Disabled Assistance Program (DTAP) to assist military personnel in making them aware of their educational opportunities as well as the benefits to which they are entitled. Much of the counseling, however, occurs weeks prior to release from active duty and for many applying for benefits immediately after discharge is not considered a top priority and they are therefore not paying close attention at the time. Some time may elapse following separation from service providing ample opportunity for benefit information to be lost or forgotten. Given this probability, the VEOP becomes most critical in providing the necessary assistance with outreach recruitment and counseling. There is no question that our military personnel are better educated than ever before, but this does not necessarily mean they are familiar with the academic life, as they may have left the service years before, or with their benefits as related to higher education. Certainly they cannot be expected to know how any one given institution operates in relationship to the DVA or what is expected of new students. On-campus offices, staffed by qualified counselors familiar with DVA educational assistance programs, can meet that need. Many individuals being separated from the military may not have planned on such early separation and consequently may not have made civilian career decisions and are in need of quality counseling to assist in this process. Without

direction and clear educational goals in mind, veterans will almost certainly waste their benefits. Access to quality counseling can prevent such waste as well as great frustration for the veterans.

Mr. Chairman, BVA is especially concerned about disabled veterans and their special need for appropriate counseling. Many severely disabled veterans may not believe they are capable of successfully completing a degree program in a university or college, or why even make the effort because, as the stereotype goes, disabled people cannot do anything anyway. Special outreach programs can and should be developed to actively recruit disabled veterans and making them aware of their benefits. But more importantly, are the opportunities that do exist for meaningful employment of people with disabilities and breaking down the stereotypes that surround this population. Further, once recruited, appropriate counseling and guidance must be provided to ensure realistic achievable choices be made and that the necessary supports are in place to assist the disabled veteran to achieve his or her goal.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we believe the VEOP can play an extremely important role in providing assistance to Chapter 35 beneficiaries enrolled in institutions of higher education. The spouses and children of severely disabled veterans may be even less familiar with their entitlement to educational assistance and what they are required to do when enrolling in college and while they are pursuing their degrees. Here again, outreach services as well as counseling can help to ensure successful completion of an appropriate degree as well as prevent over-payments which exacerbate VBA's administration of scarce resources. Once again, the provision of quality services to disabled veterans is unquestionably an investment in our future.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to submit our views for the hearing record. As always, we look forward to working with you and the subcommittee on this, or any other, issue related to education, training and employment of veterans.

WRITTEN COMMITTEE QUESTIONS AND THEIR RESPONSES

CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

H.R. 996 Post-Hearing Questions

Q1. The Veterans Education Outreach Program (VEOP) would provide counseling, outreach, certification and recruitment services to veterans. Can you describe VA's plan for administering this program? How many full-time employees would be required to administer the program?

A1. VEOP would be administered by VBA Education Service under a centralized process with support by VA Regional Offices. Other functional units within VBA would accomplish counseling and outreach activities. The application format would require each school to submit a work plan and identify certified VA students to be verified by VBA Education Service. VA Central Office would accept, process and approve applications from schools. VA Regional Offices would conduct on-site visits while conducting routine compliance surveys.

VACO Education Service has trained and qualified staff that administer Federal contracts to State Approving Agencies (SAAs). The staff members have conducted extensive research on the regulatory requirements for administering grants.

Q2. Mr. Vogel, you stated in your testimony that the VEOP program is "not an absolutely necessary program." As compared to, for example, a national service program, do you consider assisting and supporting veteran-students a higher priority? Is the VA prepared to fully assume the same outreach activities that have been carried out by VEOP personnel?

A2. A national service program is an important national objective. From the standpoint of the mission of the Veterans Benefits Administration, assisting and supporting veteran-students is an essential program goal. While this function and a national service program are not mutually exclusive, I am reluctant to rank a program outside of the purview of our mission relative to programs included in our mission to which we have a long-standing commitment.

Outreach in the VEOP context encompasses the process of certification of veteran-students by the educational institutions. This represents a significant cost and manpower commitment by the schools as we have been reminded periodically by NAVPA and school administrators. Certification is a clear example of assisting and supporting veteran-students and is an essential function to which we have attached a high priority.

We do not believe that the same level of outreach activity is necessary today as was carried out in the past by VCIP personnel. The current transition effort being conducted jointly by VA, DoL, and DoD under TAP (Transition Assistance Program) is in addition to regular ongoing outreach efforts conducted by VBA field stations with their veterans' groups, educational groups and school officials. This includes providing information about VA educational assistance and the educational counseling available to veterans through VA.

We also believe that veterans leaving military service today are somewhat different than the veterans who left service in the past. Veterans separating from military service today who actively participated in their GI Bill planning have either made

contributions to or had their military pay reduced in order to qualify for these educational benefits. These veterans are more aware of their entitlement and how they plan to use it. Further, member participation requires that the Service Departments play an active role in counseling members regarding active duty and post military education entitlements and plans.

Q3. Can you comment on the effectiveness of the performance reports submitted by participating institutions as a tool for retrieving and verifying data? What systems are in place for verifying information submitted by veterans program administrators?

A3. Performance reports would need to be developed from the ground up by Education Service in order to capture maximum useful program data from educational institutions. VA would balance reliance on detailed information received from educational institutions with reports from compliance surveys conducted by our regional office education service units. We would not rely solely on the representations of the educational institutions. Report data will be subject to verification by on-site review.

VACO Education Service will measure program effectiveness by VA Regional Office on-site visits to VEOP offices while routine compliance surveys are conducted. In addition, each grant recipient will submit reports as required of their accomplishments and expenditures. VA (VACO Education Service) would use the annual reporting fee listing reports to identify VA certified students in receipt of benefits at each IHL. The data are based on certified enrollment as of October 31st of the preceding year. Compliance surveys will enable VA to verify the number of students.

Q4. The proposed Veterans Education Outreach Program is generally patterned after a similar program established in the Department of Education under Public Law 99-498, the Higher Education Amendments Act of 1968. That program was often criticized for its poor management and lack of accountability. What can VA do to ensure that this program's effectiveness will be maximized and accountability ensured? How will program effectiveness be measured?

A4. The VA application submitted by educational institutions for VEOP grants would require a comprehensive operating plan and a copy of VA's annual reporting fee payment listing. VACO Education Service is prepared to review and process all VEOP grant applications. Payment of the grant will be authorized upon verification by VACO Education Service.

VA regional offices will perform site visits at VEOP grant facilities during normal compliance surveys. Current procedures require that compliance surveys be performed at 25 percent of active IHLs each fiscal year. VA may require each IHL to submit a report of accomplishments and documentation of total expenditures for VEOP.

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Response to Follow-Up Questions for Ms. Vera Bagley
National Association of Veteran Program Administrators
Hearing on HR 996 - March 25, 1993

Question 1. How would you assess the impact of the VEOP program on veterans' academic progress?

The Veterans Education Outreach Program is one which provides on-going contact with veteran students using their GI Bills. From the moment of first inquiry about programs, admissions, and the GI Bill, to explaining the amount of their last benefit check and how to file for graduation, and all the academic and personal problems which fall in-between these two life-changing events, the Veterans' Coordinator is the campus contact for that student.

The first activity of the VEOP program is the recruitment and encouragement of veterans who may not necessarily seek higher education as a career option. These activities include personal contact and advising, participation in ConAp and SOC programs, mailing of college and community based materials and networking with community services as well as specific production of recruitment brochures which highlight higher education as an option to complement their military service experience and enhance their marketability in the competitive work place.

In concept, the option to enter higher education is addressed in the separation activities of the military, and elements are included in the TAP outbriefings, but it is the VEOP program on the individual campuses who translate the concept into a reality . . . with a checklist of things which must be accomplished before the new veteran can be successfully transitioned from a military person to a student. The other programs can only speak to higher education in general terms. It is the VEOP coordinator who can give the servicemember the specifics on how they can use their GI Bill and survive (both educationally and personally) on that particular campus.

Once attracted to higher education, the VEOP program serves as a single campus point of contact for various other linked services, many of which are not available to the campus community as a whole. These innovative services are selected by various VEOP programs, depending on what is (or what is not) available in the community and what the needs are in that particular community. These may include VA benefit counseling (in-briefings), book loans, emergency loan funds, specialized personal counseling and counseling groups, newsletters, assistance with state or privately available programs assistance in finding part-time employment opportunities and networking with state employment development departments, housing assistance, individualized tutorial assistance, skills workshops, and scholarship searches.

It is often the VEOP program director who will act on behalf of the veteran student to resolve VA payment problems. Beyond the obvious retention effects of "timely benefit payment", the VEOP programs often provide services which assist students in academic distress, including tutorial programs, remedial workshops, test anxiety workshops, etc. Many coordinators provide counseling and assistance to students who are attempting to reenter the college after academic dismissal. Often these professionals are instrumental in presenting cases to academic boards for academic renewal. These activities are all designed to set our veteran students up for success and reach the completion of their programs. While there are other programs which are targeted to specific populations, VA programs are the only ones which serve Veterans, and these types of services are generally not available to the campus community at large.

The management of the potential overpayment of VA educational benefits is of concern not only to Congress, but to the individual veteran as well. The avoidance of overpayments is directly affected by specific academic and personal counseling, and careful monitoring of student programs to insure compliance with VA regulations and

Title 38. This activity at the campus level is only possible because of the funding and incentive provided by the VEOP program. VEOP in not a new program, and it has proven itself to meet the needs of veterans on campus very well. We are encouraged that as this program transitions from the US Department of Education to the US Department of Veterans Affairs that the liaison between the VA an Institutions of Higher Learning will be strongly enhanced.

Question 1A. During Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, VEOP representatives on college campuses provided extraordinary assistance to students who were activated. For the record, would you describe some of the actions taken by VEOP personnel to help these individuals.

During Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, campuses turned to their veterans coordinators to develop campus policies which would best serve the needs of these departing students, and perhaps more importantly, help them to return to the campus with the least amount of difficulty. Long before state or federal legislatures could mobilize to minimize the impact on these departing students, Institutions of Higher Learning had leaped forward to address this pressing need, by making full tuition refunds, buying back books (even at a loss), and setting up programs for these students to return. Veterans programs became the single point of contact for information, withdrawals, grades, refunds, and fee reductions to returning veterans, allowing these servicemembers to leave without worrying about their academic afterlife. Many projects presented public forums and support groups for friends and family, and offered referrals for individualized counseling. Upon their return, VEOP coordinators work individually with these students to resolve grade and course difficulties, admissions, academic and financial problems.

Question 2. The VA stated in its testimony that the VEOP program is "not an absolutely necessary program."

What will the effect be on veteran-students if the VEOP program is not continued.

A typically sized program would have a VEOP grant of $7,000 - $9,000, would serve a certified population of approximately 400 students and would further serve potential veterans, dependents, and active-duty servicepersons (presently not students) seeking information about education programs, the GI Bills, the SOC program and the ConAp program. VEOP programs often house the on-campus contact for the USDVA's Vocational Rehabilitation program, specialized counseling and referral programs, and special education programs. It is often through the VEOP program that the VA "contracts" for books, services, and supplies for participants in its Vocational Rehabilitation program. The Veterans' Coordinator also reviews all campus publications and policies to guard against negative impacts on veteran students, and when the VA's payment policies don't coincide with the need of students to pay fees, it is the Veterans' Coordinator that arranges for fee deferments. Without the incentive provided by the VEOP program, these activities would virtually cease, the OVA would disappear, and the certification process could be distributed to technicians unfamiliar with Title 38 for a simple verification process. Counseling and campus-based reinforcement to the veteran student regarding the effective and proper use of benefits would be greatly diminished. The effect on the individual students would be greater difficulty in meeting the criteria required for payment under the GI Bill, payment delays due to lengthened processing time and a higher certification error rate on campus. Special programs which included veterans would virtually disappear - especially in these days of fiscal crisis.

College campuses have only an obligation to certify the coursework which is being taken by students using the GI Bills. Beyond that, Institutions of Higher Learning do not place emphasis on the veteran as a special population. With institutional support diminishing in most states, and because of shrinking budgets, VA Coordinators must have external funding if they are to have an avenue to provide services. Without the VEOP program, much of the outreach, retention, personal counseling and benefit counseling

which now occurs would disappear. In the event of a military crisis, there would likely be no knowledgeable professional in place who would interface on the campus to make sure that these men and women get the enhanced services they need to "clear up" their academic records and re-enter the university. No one would be "professionally available" to advocate for assigning appropriate credit for military training. No one would be "professionally obligated" to help these students understand their rights and responsibilities under the GI Bills. A vital link in the educational benefit delivery system would be lost.

Because of the VEOP grant, campuses provide space, professional staff, utilities, janitorial service, repairs, computer support and many other tangible items for the program - all at no cost to the federal government, and all to serve veteran students. The VEOP grants are dollars well spent and deserve your support.

The effect of HR 996 would be to retain the expertise that now exists on college campuses which in turn helps to keep payments to veteran students correct. It would help boost the integrity of the entire GI Bill benefit payments system. It directly serves the active duty service-member, the reservist, the veteran and the children and spouses of deceased and disabled veterans with appropriate, campus based outreach, educational advising and personal counseling. I assure you that no other group on a college campus gets this kind of service for a mere $9,000 a year. I also assure you that this program will be irreparably changed in the absence of the grant which mandates that we "tie it all together" for these student veterans.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR MR. BENJAMIN C. BUCKLEY
SERVICEMEMBERS OPPORTUNITY COLLEGES
HEARING ON H.R. 996 - MARCH 25, 1993

QUESTION 1. Mr. Buckley, in this time of severe budget restraint, what aspects of the VEOP program make it important enough to deserve funding?

ANSWER. The most important aspect of the VEOP program is the capability it gives colleges to provide outreach services to veterans and members of National Guard and Reserve units. Outreach services take many forms but all have the same goal of providing the best service possible to veterans as they enter college and during their time as students. I will focus my comments on Army veterans, and Army National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers because I am more familiar with the Army and Army education programs. Also, the Army is the largest service, has the highest percentage of its soldiers enrolled in the Montgomery GI Bill and has the largest percentage of veterans using GI Bill education benefits. However, my comments apply to veterans and reservists of all branches of the military because they receive the same outreach services provided by VEOP.

During the six year period from FY 85 through FY 90, 460,308 enlistees in the Regular Army agreed to participate in the Montgomery GI Bill. A Department of the Army study dated May 19, 1991 shows that 61.15 percent of these soldiers who had enlisted during FY 85 and been discharged by FY 90 were using their Montgomery GI Bill education benefits. See Enclosure 1. Assuming that this trend continues, then 281,478 soldiers who enlisted between FY 85 and FY 90 will use their education benefits within one to three years after completing their enlistment. This figure does not include Army National Guard or Army Reserve enlistees who had no prior service (at least 50 percent) and were automatically eligible for Selected Reserve Montgomery GI Bill education benefits. Also, it does not include veterans or reservists from other military branches or veterans from an earlier era. The percentage of Army veterans using Montgomery GI Bill education benefits is bound to increase for reasons such as the following:

• During this period approximately 92 percent of Army enlistees were high school diploma graduates and in FY 92 this figure reached 100 percent. Army enlistees are increasingly college-capable men and women.

• Approximately 95 percent of these enlistees agreed to participate in the Montgomery GI Bill and make a nonrefundable contribution of $1,200 toward education benefits that must be used within ten years of discharge. Clearly the most powerful recruiting incentive the Army has is money for college from the Montgomery GI Bill and Army College Fund. Most Army enlistees intend to go to college after military service.

• Concurrent Admissions Program (ConAP). ConAP is a joint program of the Army Recruiting Command, Army National Guard, Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges and 871 participating colleges and universities. The goals of ConAP are to increase enlistments of college-capable men and women who are postponing college (usually for financial reasons) and increase the number of Army veterans enrolled in college and using GI Bill education benefits. Army and Army National Guard recruiters help new soldiers select colleges and apply for admission concurrent with their enlistment. If eligible, ConAP colleges admit the soldiers and defer enrollment in class for up to two years after discharge from active duty or, for reservists, after completing Initial Active Duty for Training. The emphasis is on local colleges since most soldiers return to their home areas after completing one enlistment. As of May 21, 1993, 23,299 soldiers have requested application materials from ConAP colleges and 9,751 have been accepted for admission. Some have already enrolled as students. The number of soldiers admitted to college is increasing rapidly as the program matures. This number will take another jump when the Army National Guard implements ConAP nationwide beginning in September 1993.

When a college accepts an Army veteran or reservist for admission, they are automatically linked to a Veteran's Program Administrator or someone of similar title. Veteran's Program Administrators performs three essential services: • Provide information to veterans, • Counsel veterans on their benefits, • Submit appropriate forms and information to Regional Field Offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Veteran's Program Administrators draw support from VEOP for "outreach services" such as providing information and counseling. They use VEOP funds to prepare booklets, pamphlets, newsletters, fact sheets, etc., that provide information to veterans. Sample pamphlets from Austin Community College in Austin, Texas and Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, Virginia are enclosed. See Enclosures 2 and 3 respectively. VEOP funds are used to provide knowledgeable part-time persons to explain VA benefits and procedures to veterans. The Veteran's Program Administrator relates everything the veteran has ever learned about education benefits to the college. He or she provides information, answers questions, explains VA rules, fills out forms and helps the veteran complete institutional requirements for admission. The administrator whose salary is partially paid, the student assistant, the information brochures and handouts, the professional conferences attended - all

contribute toward assisting veterans. This is outreach. Probably no two colleges do it the same way, but the VEOP stipend is critical to the process, especially in the outreach of information and personal contact with veterans. No matter how it is done, the goal is to say to every veteran, "You are enrolled as a student, everything is taken care of and you will receive your GI Bill education benefits from the Veterans Administration." This scenario repeats itself hundreds of thousands of times a year at colleges across the country.

QUESTION 2. Where should veterans' education programs, and related programs, be placed in the list of national priorities?

ANSWER. Veterans' education programs should be placed very high on the list of national priorities because the return to the nation on the relatively small investment will be great. As a group, veterans are mature, motivated students who work hard, get good grades, persevere and graduate. They have money for college which means that more financial aid money is available to assist disadvantaged students.

The military services spend thousands of dollars to train each enlisted soldier. By the end of their first enlistment, most soldiers (also sailors, airmen, and marines) leave the service. They leave having mastered a job skill and performed that skill in a disciplined job environment demanding high standards, self-motivation, self-discipline and individual responsibility. Military service develops supervisory and leadership skills that, if not practiced, are absorbed by watching role models and leaders at work. These skills and personal qualities are exactly what employers, families, communities and the nation need. Veterans are a national asset.

Approximately 30 percent of Army enlistees are minority and this will carry over to veterans. A challenge is to enroll in college as many minority veterans as possible. The Concurrent Admissions Program (ConAP) is a step in this direction. Of the nation's 116 historically or predominantly black colleges, 43 are participating in ConAP and the number continues to rise. The same is true of Hispanic-serving colleges.

Veterans represent every ethnic, economic, social and geographic element in American society. They have values of group achievement, personal responsibility and nationhood. They are drug free. Their potential service to our communities can be maximized by post-secondary education and every effort should be made to do so. VEOP is focused directly at the veteran and deserves a very high priority.

Montgomery GI Bill and Army College Fund Awards

19 May 1991		MGIB ALONE	2YR ACF	3YR ACF	4YR ACF	TOTAL ACF	TOTAL MGIB
FY85	TAKERS	8,249	3,078	3,020	7,594	13,692	21,941
	AWARDS	4,718	2,656	2,467	3,575	8,698	13,416
	% WHO USE	57.19%	86.29%	81.69%	47.08%	63.53%	61.15%
FY86	TAKERS	53,602	10,391	8,948	11,841	31,180	84,782
	AWARDS	9,384	6,543	4,543	2,161	13,247	22,631
	% WHO USE	17.51%	62.97%	50.77%	18.25%	42.49%	26.69%
FY87	TAKERS	70,789	10,219	10,398	2,436	23,013	93,802
	AWARDS	4,675	4,768	2,640	110	7,518	12,193	
	% WHO USE	6.60%	46.66%	25.39%	4.52%	32.67%	13.00%
FY88	TAKERS	75,001	4,691	6,779	5,047	16,517	91,518
	AWARDS	1,002	1,598	77	41	1,716	2,718
	% WHO USE	1.34%	34.07%	1.14%	0.81%	10.39%	2.97%
FY89	TAKERS	79,572	7,035	6,556	4,446	18,037	97,609
	AWARDS	178	23	16	4	43	221
	% WHO USE	0.22%	0.33%	0.24%	0.09%	0.24%	0.23%
FY90	TAKERS	48,573	9,594	6,026	6,463	22,083	70,656
	AWARDS	13	8	4	2	14	27
	% WHO USE	0.03%	0.08%	0.07%	0.03%	0.06%	0.04%
FY91	TAKERS	24,314	3,805	2,714	3,853	10,372	34,686
	AWARDS	5	7	4	7	18	23
	% WHO USE	0.02%	0.18%	0.15%	0.18%	0.17%	0.07%
TOTAL	TAKERS	360,100	48,813	44,441	41,680	134,894	494,994
	AWARDS	19,975	16,603	9,761	5,900	31,254	51,229
	% WHO USE	5.55%	34.00%	21.94%	14.16%	23.17%	10.35%

Enclosure 1

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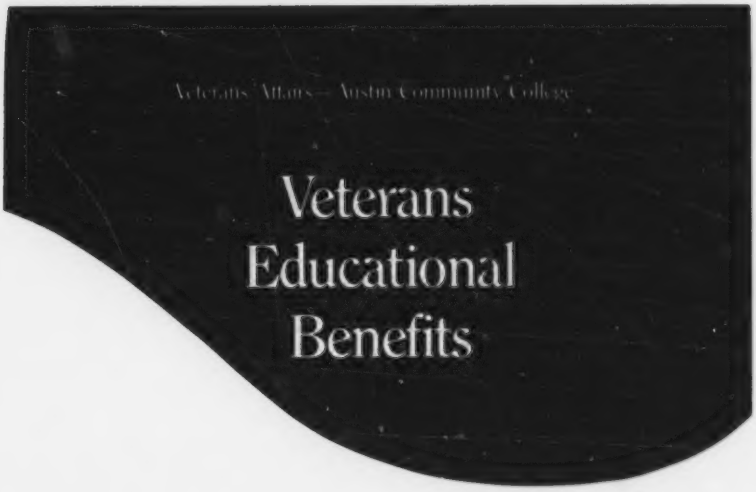
Veterans Affairs — Austin Community College
Veterans
Educational
Benefits

Encl 2

Table of Contents

Philosophy of the Veteran Affairs Office 3
When to Apply for Benefits 3
How to Apply for Benefits 3
Certification Criteria 3
Change of Program 4
Advance Payment 4
Satisfactory Progress 4
Repeat Course Work 4
Tutorial Assistance 4
Work Study 5
Withdrawals 5
Block Time Programs 5
Parallel Study Courses 6
Independent Study/ITV Courses 6
Hazelwood Act 6
Additional Financial Assistance 7
Information Regarding Specific Benefit Types:
- Chapter 30 Sonny Montgomery G.I. Bill 7
- Chapter 34 Old G.I. Bill (program terminated 1-1-90) 10
- Chapter 34/30 Benefits 10
- Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation 11
- Chapter 32 Post Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) 12
  - Section 901 13
  - Section 903 14
- Chapter 35 Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance 15
- Chapter 106 Selected Reserve Educational Program 17

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Addresses and Telephone Numbers

Veteran Affairs—District Administrative Office 483-7557

Austin Community College
ATTN: Veterans Affairs
5930 Middle Fiskville Road
Austin, Texas 78752

Location: Allstate Building
5930 Middle Fiskville Road
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Monday - Friday

Campus Offices: Rio Grande 495-7202
Hours: Flexible – Check with the District Administrative Office for exact time and days

Other Austin Community College numbers:

Campus	Financial Aid	Admissions	Student Service	Advising Centers
District	483-7549	483-7501		
Northridge	832-4734	832-4730	832-4719	832-4729
Rio Grande	495-7165	495-7104	495-7116	495-7120
Riverside	389-4022	389-4020	389-4014	389-6201
Rutherford	495-1638	495-1638	495-1671	

Department of Veteran Affairs Regional Office
1400 North Valley Mills Drive
Waco, Texas 76799
Toll Free Number 1-800-827-1000

The intent of this publication is to provide general information. We strive for accuracy. However, the information in this Austin Community College brochure may not represent the official views of the Department of Veteran Affairs. The information here is subject to change without notice.

The Philosophy of the Veteran Affairs Office

Our role at the Austin Community College Veteran Affairs Office is to assist you in pursuing your educational, professional or vocational objective. We are available to answer questions about veteran benefits, certify enrollments for the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) and monitor student degree plans and academic progress.

Although we work to ensure that DVA regulations are satisfied, we have no authority to make judgments regarding benefit status. Only the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) may determine the eligibility of individuals for veteran educational benefits and to approve or disapprove payment of benefits.

When to Apply for Benefits

Although you may apply anytime, submitting your paperwork eight weeks before registration should give you time to complete your file before certification. Allow enough time to have your transcripts sent to the ACC VA Office and evaluated.

How to Apply for Benefits

The Department of Veterans Affairs requires that specific documents be executed. The required forms vary according to the type of benefit and to the circumstances. The forms that are necessary for you to complete are listed in the "Applicable Forms" section of your benefit type in this brochure.

We, at the ACC VA Office are available to advise you and to forward your documents to the appropriate regional office of the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA).

Certification Criteria

Your file must be complete before an enrollment certification is submitted to the Department of Veteran Affairs for payment. The following criteria applies:

Activation: **You must activate your file each semester you enroll by either completing an activate form at the VA booth during registration or by phoning the ACC VA office to let us know that you want to claim benefits, if you register by ACCESS (registration by telephone).**

Degree Plan: Courses not required by your degree plan cannot be certified for payment. Electives/substitutions/waivers require departmental approval. Prerequisites may be certified only if taken before the required course.

Previous Training: The Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) requires that credit for previous training be applied to your degree plan. Individual official transcripts from the following institutions must be submitted to the Veteran Affairs Office for evaluation, before your enrollment is certified:

- Previous colleges attended,
- Military transcripts: CCAF, CLEP, DANTES, USAFI, and/or Army/American Council on Education Registry transcript
- Official military training certificates of completion (Contact the ACC VA Office for military training evaluation procedures.)

Veterans with at least six months service and an honorable discfiarge may receive four credit hours of health and physical education.

Change of Program

Students who are making satisfactory progress may be approved for an initial change of program upon their request to the Department of Veteran Affairs. The DVA will authorize a second change of program only if evidence provided by the student and/or the institution, or additional evidence obtained through requested VA counseling, shows the proposed program is suitable to the student's aptitudes, interests and abilities. Since the law generally allows a student to make only two changes of program, you should plan the use of your benefits carefully.

Advance Payment

Eligible students wanting advance payment must apply with the ACC VA Office at least 40 working days before the semester begins to allow sufficient processing time so check will arrive prior to registration. (Check the ACC Course Schedule for dates.) Your first VA check will be sent to the College and released upon presentation of paid receipt to the VA office. This means you must pay your tuition and fees before you can receive the check. To be eligible for advance payment you must:

- Enroll for at least half-time training and
- Enter or reenter training after an interval of 30 days or more from your prior period of enrollment.

The paperwork for advance payment is required to have been received by the DVA at least 30 days and not more than 120 days before the beginning of the term.

The advance payment covers the first partial month and the next month of the semester. Thus, your second check for Fall arrives in November; for Spring, in April. Contact the ACC VA Office for more information.

Advance payment is not allowed for students under Section 901.

Satisfactory Progress

You must meet the academic satisfactory progress criteria given in the ACC Catalog to be eligible for certification. Students on academic suspension or on probation for two consecutive semesters must be reported to the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) for unsatisfactory progress.

Once reported for unsatisfactory progress, your benefits cannot be resumed unless the DVA finds that the cause of your unsatisfactory progress has been removed and your program is suitable to your aptitudes, interests and abilities.

Repeat Course Work

Generally, the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) will not allow payment for course work for which a student has already received credit.

However, provisions applicable to Chapter 30 and 32 may allow a student to repeat a course if it can be established that the repeat is:

- necessary to update knowledge, skills, or technological advances in the individual's field of employment; and
- necessary for successful pursuit of the current or intended program of education.

Tutorial Assistance

Tutorial assistance is an authorized benefit only under Chapters 30, 31, 32, and 35 provided your instructor submits a statement verifying the need for a tutor to complete the course satisfactorily. VA may

pay up to $100.00 a month for tutoring and up to a maximum of $1200 during the eligibility period.

Work Study

The Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) work-study program permits eligible veterans to perform services for DVA in return for a monetary allowance equal to the higher of Federal or State minimum wage. The maximum number of hours a student may work will be based upon 25 times the number of weeks in the student's enrollment period. Work-study services may be performed at DVA regional offices, educational institutions, DVA medical facilities, DVA national cemeteries, and certain other organizations approved for outreach activities. The services must be DVA related.

Eligibility: Effective May 1, 1990 students pursuing programs of education or training at a three quarter time rate or more under Chapters 30, 31, 32, 35, and Section 903. (Students are required to be enrolled for at least 3/4 time to be eligible.)

Also effective May 1, 1990, Chapter 106 students are eligible for work-study for services relating to the Chapter 106 program performed at Department of Defense (DOD) facilities.

Withdrawals

It is your responsibility to report any withdrawals to the ACC VA Office. Unreported withdrawals may burden you with an overpayment liability.

Any course load reduction is reported to the regional office of the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA). If you submit mitigating circumstances for withdrawing, and they are accepted, you may be paid up to the last day of attendance. If not, you will not be paid for the dropped course.

Effective June 1, 1989, the Department of Veteran Affairs will consider that mitigating circumstances exist in the "first instance" of withdrawal for courses totaling not more than 6 semester hours. "First instance" means first instance occurring after 6-1-89. The "first instance" consideration applies to all benefits types except Section 901.

Block Time Programs

ACC offers a variety of Vocational/Technical Certificate (Block Time) programs that provide skills in occupational areas. They are as follows:

Allied Health Sciences

Vocational Nursing Program
54 credit hours/1472 clock hours

Surgical Technology Program
46 credit hours/1378 clock hours

Diagnostic Medical Sonography
36 credit hours/1376 clock hours

Note: The training time for the above two programs is measured in credit hours. However, it is reported to the VA in clock hours for pay purposes.

Vocational/Technical Programs:

	clock hours
Automotive Mechanics	1400
Drafting	1000
Home Entertainment Systems	1400
Horticulture Landscaping	720
*Office Occupations	700
Power Mechanics **	
Small Engines	360
Marine Engines	720
Motorcycle Repair	720
Upholstery	1400
Welding	1400

Note: Training time for the above programs is measured and reported to the DVA in clock hours as follows:

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Full time = 6 hours a day, 30 hours per week, 5 days per week

Half time = 5 hours a day, 15 hours per week, 3 days per week

*Office Occupations is only offered at the full time rate.

**Sections must meet at least 15 hours per week to qualify for payment at a half-time rate.

Parallel Study Courses

Not all courses from the parallel studies department are approved for veteran educational benefits by the Department of Veteran Affairs. The ACC VA Office, provides a list of those approved. However, a student must complete the assessment test to determine need for parallel study courses. Parallel study courses must be taken prior to the required course(s).

Note: Persons eligible for benefits under Chapters 30 and 32 and Section 903 are authorized payment for Parallel Study courses (subject to the above restrictions) on and after August 15, 1989.

Persons eligible for benefits under Chapter 106 are eligible (subject to the above restrictions) effective October 1, 1990.

Persons eligible for benefits under Section 901 are not authorized payment for courses from the Parallel Studies Department.

Independent Study/ITV Courses

The Austin Community College Veteran Affairs Office provides a list of independent study/ITV courses approved for veteran benefits. However, the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) only allows up to five hours for these courses for benefit payment purposes per semester. For example, a student is enrolled for six hours in residence and six hours in independent study courses (full-time). However, in determining the award, DVA will allow the six hours in residence, but only five hours for the independent study courses for a total of 11 hours (3/4 time).

Note: ITV courses do not qualify for monthly payment unless taken concurrently with at least one in-residence course.

If you are only enrolled in independent study course work, you will be eligible for tuition and fee reimbursement (or quarter-time pay rate under Chapter 32 or Chapter 106).

Hazelwood Act

Veterans who have exhausted their veterans educational benefits and students whose benefits will expire soon should look into the Hazelwood Act. The Hazelwood Act is a State of Texas educational program which allows veterans to attend state supported schools on a tuition-free basis if the following basic requirements are met:

- Must have been a Texas resident at the time of entering the military service, as noted on the DD Form 214.
- You must have resided in Texas for at least 12 months immediately prior to registration.
- You must have been HONORABLY discharged and must have served at

least 180 days, excluding active duty for training in the Reserves.

- You must have exhausted all entitlement to other VA educational benefits and not be eligible for financial aid grants.
- Hazelwood applicants should apply at least 60 days before the semester during which they expect to attend.

To apply for the Hazelwood Act:

- Bring DD Form 214 to the ACC Veteran Affairs Office, to get a statement that all veteran educational benefits have been exhausted.
- Contact the Financial Aid Office regarding financial aid grants. You may need to apply for a grant and be turned down, before being eligible to use the Hazelwood Act. If you are obviously not eligible for a grant, and you furnish the information necessary to prove ineligibility, the Financial Aid Office may give you a grant denial letter.
- Contact the Austin Community College's Business Office to make application for the Hazelwood Act.

Veterans interested in learning more about the Hazelwood Act should phone 483-7557.

Additional Financial Assistance

For information regarding additional financial assistance for which you may be eligible, contact the Financial Aid Office of Austin Community College.

For more information, check the specific chapter applicable to you.

Chapter 30
Sonny Montgomery G.I. Bill

The new Sonny Montgomery G.I. Bill provides educational assistance to individuals that enlisted in the active military forces (including Public Health Services and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) at any time, after June 30, 1985 (except those individuals who may qualify under the combined Old G.I. Bill).

All paperwork regarding Chapter 30 educational benefits for students attending ACC is processed through the Department of Veteran Affairs Regional Office, P.O. Box 8888, Muskogee, Oklahoma 74402-8888.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Completion of High School Education as evidenced by a secondary school diploma or equivalent certificate or completion of the equivalent of 12 semester hours in a program of education leading to a standard college degree. This requirement must be satisfied before completing the required period of service on which eligibility is based.

Honorable Discharge: To be eligible the veteran must have been released from active duty with the character of discharge specifically listed as "Honorable." "Under honorable conditions," a "General" discharge, or any other character of discharge automatically disqualifies the individual for this program, and he or she may not receive a refund of monies previously reduced from military pay for the Chapter 30 program.

Eligibility is based on one of the following qualifying categories:

1A. First entered active duty after June 30, 1985; has an initial obligated period of active duty of less than three years; and who has no service obligation in the selected reserves/guard.

IB: First entered active duty after June 30, 1985, and who has an initial obligated period of active duty of three years.

IC: First entered active duty after June 30, 1985, and has an initial obligated period of active duty of two years (see Note 2) followed by an obligation to serve four years in the selected reserves/guard. (To be eligible, you must have entered a reserve or guard unit within one year from your release from active duty.)

IIA: Must be eligible to receive Chapter 34 benefits on December 31, 1989, has served without a break in service from October 19, 1984 through June 30, 1985, must have continuous active duty service after June 30, 1985 for at least three years. (See Note 2) (Note: Breaks in service before October 19, 1984 may affect the delimiting date.)

IIB: Must be eligible to receive Chapter 34 benefits on December 31, 1989; has served without a break in service from October 19, 1984 through June 30, 1985, must have continuous active duty service after June 30, 1985 for at least two years followed by an obligation to serve four years in the selected reserves/guard. (Note: Breaks in service before October 19, 1984 may affect the delimiting date.)

Other criteria, such as: early release, release for medical conditions, release for convenience of the government due to reduction in force, may apply for Chapter 30 benefits. If any of these conditions or any other exceptional circumstances apply to you, you should request specific information from the DVA regarding your benefit status.

Note 1: Individuals with dual eligibility (Chapter 34/30) will be considered under Chapter 30 eligibility only beginning on January 1, 1990.

Note 2: Some individuals may qualify with only 20 or 30 months active duty. Contact the Department of Veteran Affairs for determination.

Pay Reductions: Persons in eligibility categories IA, IB, and IC, will have their military pay reduced by $100.00 each month for the first twelve months after entering active duty. Persons in eligibility categories IIa, and IIB will not have their military pay reduced.

Individuals Not Eligible:

(1) Those who received commissions after December 31, 1976 as officers in the Armed Forces as graduates from the United States Military Academy, Naval Academy, Air Force Academy, or the Coast Guard Academy.

(2) Those who completed a program of educational assistance under a ROTC scholarship program. Excluded are those completing a ROTC program without a scholarship.

Entitlement: Maximum entitlement is 36 months.

Delimiting Date: A veteran normally has a period of ten years from the date of discharge to use his or her educational benefits, however, the ten year limitation may vary for persons in categories IIA and IIB. Therefore, we recommend consulting with the Department of Veteran Affairs on this matter.

Active Duty Personnel: Persons on active duty must have served a minimum of two years continuous active duty before becoming eligible to receive benefits under Chapter 30. The service person must consult with the Education Services Officer (ESO) on his or her military facility before submitting an application for DVA benefits. The ESO will discuss the various educational assistance opportunities available to the service

person. The law prohibits concurrent payment of tuition assistance by the military service and DVA educational assistance for pursuit of the same course.

Duplication of Benefits: An individual may not receive benefits under Chapter 30 concurrently with benefits under another law. An individual who qualifies for assistance under Chapter 30 and Chapter 34 may not receive benefits under Chapter 30 until January 1, 1990.

Programs Allowed: Benefits under Chapter 30 may be paid for institute-of-higher-learning courses, vocational training, apprenticeships, other on-the-job training, correspondence training, and remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses. Flight training is approved for a four year period beginning September 30, 1990 and ending September 1994.

On and after August 15, 1989 deficiency or remedial courses (courses from the Parallel Studies Department) provided such courses are necessary to enable the individual to pursue an approved program of education.

Special Requirements: Attendance Verification must be certified on a monthly basis by the student. Benefits for any month will not be paid until the monthly verification form is received by the Department of Veteran Affairs Regional Office, P.O. Box 8888, Muskogee, Oklahoma 74402-8888

9

Advance Payment Allowed

Work Study: Allowed

Tutorial Assistance: Allowed. Total maximum tutorial benefit $1,200. There is no entitlement charge for the first $600. of tutorial assistance. Entitlement is charged for payments beyond $600.00.

Applicable Forms – Chapter 30 – Eligibility

If you have never used DVA benefits before, you will need:

- Application for Benefits (VA Form 22-1990)
- DD Form 214, member 4 original or certified copy from a custodian of public records

If you have used benefits at another institution, you will need:

- Change of Program or Place of Training (VA Form 22-1995)

If you are a transient student, following a degree plan offered by another institution, you will need:

- VA Form 315 initiated by the parent institution (or in the case of the University of Texas, a parent institution form)
- Change of Program or Place of Training (VA Form 22-1995)

If you are enrolled at ACC and your parent school concurrently, you will need:

- VA Form 315 initiated by the parent institution (or, in the case of the University of Texas, a parent institution form)

Basic Rate Table* – Chapter 30

Training Time	Monthly Rate: Persons in Eligibility Category IA whose initial obligated period of active duty is 2 years	All other eligible persons at the basic rate
Full	$275.00	~~$350.00~~ 400
3/4	206.25	~~262.50~~ 300
1/2	137.50	~~175.00~~ 200
Between 1/2 & 1/4	137.50	175.00
1/4 or Less	68.75	75.50

*Note: These are basic rates only and do not include supplemental monies. Persons in eligibility categories IIA and IIB may qualify for additional money.

The monthly rate for service persons and veterans training at less than 1/2 time may not exceed the monthly pro rata charges for tuition and fees. Students attending ACC who are enrolled at less than a half time rate, will be eligible for reimbursement for tuition and fees only.

Chapter 34 (Old G. I. BILL)

This program terminated on January 1, 1990.

Chapter 34/30 – Benefits

Veterans who were eligible for Chapter 34 benefits on December 31, 1989 and who meet the requirements outlined in eligibility categories IIA or IIB of Chapter 30 are eligible for educational benefits.

Attendance Verification: As required by Chapter 30, individuals eligible for Chapter 34/30 must also verify school attendance on a monthly basis.

Individuals who meet these requirements are eligible for the Chapter 30 basic rate plus half of the Chapter 34 rate.

Applicable Forms – Chapter 34/30 – Dual Eligibility

In addition to the forms required for Chapter 30:

- Marriage license (original or certified copy)
- Birth certificates for dependent children (original or certified copies)
- Divorce decrees

Monthly Chapter 34 Payment Chart – Halved

Number of Dependents	Full Time (12 Hours)*	3/4 Time (9-11 Hours)*	Half Time (6-8 Hours)*
0	$188.00	$141.50	$ 94.00
1	224.00	168.00	112.00
2	255.00	191.50	127.50
3	271.00	203.50	132.00
Each additional dependent	16.00	12.50	8.50

* unless course work does not equal standard class sessions

Chapter 31
Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is designed to provide all services and assistance necessary to enable veterans with service-connected disabilities to obtain suitable employment. Under this program, the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) pays for tuition, books, supplies and other necessary items required by the veteran for school attendance. This includes medical and dental care (when approved by the Department of Veteran Affairs).

Eligibility: A veteran who served in the armed forces after September 16, 1940, would be eligible if the following conditions are met:

(a) He/she suffered a service-connected disability (at least 20 percent disability).

(b) He/she was discharged or released under other than dishonorable conditions.

(c) The Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) determines that he/she needs vocational rehabilitation services and assistance to overcome an employment handicap. The service-connected disabilities must materially contribute to the employment handicap.

Length of Program: Eligible veterans may receive up to 4 years of full-time training, or its equivalent in part-time training. In some cases training may be extended, if approved by the Department of Veteran Affairs.

Period of Eligibility: Generally, a veteran must complete a rehabilitation program within 12 years from the date the Department of Veteran Affairs notifies him or her of entitlement to compensation. This period may be deferred or extended if the veteran has a serious employment handicap.

Following participation in the training portion of a rehabilitation plan, a veteran may receive counseling, job search, and work adjustment services for up to 18 months.

Advance Payment: Not allowed. However, a special interest-free loan may be available for emergencies, if approved by the Department of Veteran Affairs.

Work Study: Allowed

Tutorial Assistance: Allowed

Active Duty Personnel: Not applicable

Applicable Forms: Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation (VA Form 28-1900)

Monthly Subsistence Allowance
Chapter 31

Number of Dependents	Full Time (12 Hours)*	3/4 Time (9-11 Hours)*	Half Time (6-8 Hours)*
0	$333.00	$250.00	$167.00
1	413.00	310.00	207.00
2	486.00	364.00	244.00
Each additional dependent over 2	35.00	27.00	18.00

*unless course work does not equal standard class sessions.

Chapter 32 (VEAP)

Chapter 32, the Post Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP), provides educational assistance to individuals who initially entered active duty after December 31, 1976. While on active duty, the service person could voluntarily contribute from $25.00 to $100.00 per month (or a lump-sum contribution) up to a maximum of $2,700.00 to the educational fund. The services matched the individual's contribution on a two for one basis up to a maximum educational fund of $8,100.00. In some instances, additional contributions (kickers) to the educational fund could be made by the military services as a recruiting or retention incentive.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Entered active duty after December 31, 1976 and elected to participate in the VEAP Program.
- Served under honorable conditions.

Individuals entering military service after September 7, 1980 must serve a continuous period of at least 24 months to qualify for VEAP (except for specific exceptions: *e.g.*, disability, hardship, etc.).

Entitlements: Maximum entitlement is 36 months. Participants receive monthly payments for the number of months they contributed, or for 36 months, whichever is less. The amount of the payments is determined by dividing the number of months benefits will be paid into the participant's training fund total. A veteran may request a refund of his or her unused individual contribution at any time.

Delimiting Date: Ten years and one day following date of discharge.

Active Duty Personnel: Benefit payments are made to service persons on the same basis as they are to veterans, after completion of the first obligated period of active duty service.

Prohibition on Receiving Credit under Two Programs: An individual may not earn entitlement under Chapter 32 and 106 based on the same period of active duty. The individual must elect whether the period of active duty is to be credited to Chapter 32 or 106.

Programs Allowed: Institute of higher learning and non-degree programs, NCD (non-college degree or vocational schools) programs, correspondence courses, apprenticeship and OJT (on-the-job training), cooperative training at a full-time rate, elementary and high school programs.

Remedial and deficiency training may be pursued and certified under VEAP as well as refresher training beginning on or after August 15, 1989, for course work which will permit the individual to update knowledge and skills or be instructed in the technological advances which have occurred in the individual's field of employment. The eligible person will be charged entitlement for pursuit of these courses as with any other program of education.

Advance Payment: Allowed

Work Study: Allowed

Tutorial Assistance: Allowed

Maximum tutorial assistance allowed per month is $100. The total maximum tutorial benefit is $1200. There is no charge to entitlement for the first $600. of tutorial assistance. Entitlement is charged for payments in excess of $600.

Applicable Forms:

If you have never used DVA benefits before, you will need:

- Application for Benefits (VA Form 22-1990)

- DD Form 214 (original or certified copy by a custodian of public records)

If you have used benefits at another institution, you will need:

- Change of Program or Place of Training (VA Form 22-1995)

If you are a transient student, following a degree plan offered by another institution, you will need:

- VA Form 315 initiated by the parent institution (or in the case of the University of Texas, a parent institution form)
- Change of Program or Place of Training (VA Form 22-1995)

If you are enrolled at ACC and your parent school concurrently, you will need:

- VA Form 315 initiated by the parent institution (or, in the case of the University of Texas, a parent institution form.)

Chapter 32 Monthly Subsistence Allowance Payment Categories:

	Semester Hours
Full time	12 or more
Three-quarter time	9-11
Half time	6-8
Quarter time	3-5

Monthly rates are determined by the DVA based on amount of money contributed by the individual and kickers, if applicable.

Section 901

Section 901 (Chapter 107) is an educational assistance program funded by the Department of Defense (DOD) and administered by the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA). The designated field station responsible for administering the Section 901 program is the Department of Veteran Affairs Regional Office in Waco, Texas.

Eligibility Criteria: The individual must have been specifically selected by the military services to participate in this program during the period of December 1, 1980 through September 30, 1981 (or delayed entry).

Participants must have been high school graduates.

Entitlements: Maximum entitlement is 36 months. Benefits payable under this program consist of two separate payment categories:

- Educational assistance allowance to help pay for tuition, fees, books, etc., and
- Monthly subsistence allowance as determined by the Secretary of Defense.

Delimiting Date: Ten years and one day following date of discharge.

Programs Allowed: Approved college, university, trade, technical or vocational training schools

Special Provisions: Payments are not allowed for any non-credit courses, including deficiency, remedial, basic skills or refresher courses.

No benefits can be paid for any correspondence study or ITV courses.

Enrollment must be certified one semester at a time.

Benefits may be transferred to the spouse or child/children under certain conditions.

Advance Payment: Not allowed

Work Study: Not allowed

Tutorial Assistance: Not allowed

Applicable Forms are the same as listed under Chapter 32 except that the initial application for benefits is different and must be requested from the Department of Veteran Affairs. It is the "Application for Educational Assistance Test Program Benefits" (VA Form 22-8889).

Section 901
Monthly Subsistence Allowance Payment Schedule

Full time	12 semester hour or more
Half time	6-11 semester hours

Section 903

Section 903 Noncontributory VEAP authorized the armed forces to test a modification of the Chapter 32 Program between October 1, 1980 and September 30, 1981. Under this test program, the military services made all monthly contributions to the educational fund on behalf of the participant. In some cases, the military services made additional cash contributions (kickers).

Eligibility Criteria: An individual must have been specifically selected by the military services to participate in this program.

Entitlements: Maximum entitlement is 36 months. Monthly rates are based on amount contributed by the military service. There is no refund provision under this test program.

Delimiting Date: Ten years and one day following date of discharge.

Programs Allowed: Institute of higher learning degree and non-degree programs, NCD Programs, correspondence courses, apprenticeship and OJT.

Advance Payment: Allowed

Work Study: Allowed

Tutorial Assistance: Not allowed

Monthly Subsistence Allowance Payment Categories:

Full time (12 or more semester hours)

3/4 time (9-11 semester hours)

Half time (6-8 semester hours)

1/4 time (3-5 semester hours)

Applicable Forms are the same as those listed for Chapter 32.

Chapter 35
Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance

This program is designed for dependents of veterans who died while on active duty, died as a result of a service-connected disability after release from active duty, or who became totally, permanently disabled due to a service-connected disability while in active duty, captured, detained, or interred in line of duty by a foreign power for more than 90 days. The Department of Veteran Affairs determines eligibility.

Entitlements: A spouse or child of a veteran may qualify for a total of 45 months of educational assistance.

Delimiting Date:

Spouse: Generally, ten years from date eligibility began.

Children: Basic ending date is the child's 26th birthday. Modification to the delimiting date may occur if the child was over 18 at date of eligibility. However, the delimiting date cannot be extended beyond the child's 31st birthday.

Programs Allowed: Postsecondary programs approved by the state approving agency which normally includes programs in colleges, universities, technical institutes, vocational schools, business schools, and facilities providing apprenticeships or other on-the-job training.

Advance Payment: Allowed

Tutorial Assistance: Allowed

Work Study: Allowed

Applicable Forms:

If you have never used DVA benefits before, you will need:

- Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (VA Form 22-5490)
- Birth certificate (official or certified copy) showing names of parents if you qualify as a child of a veteran.
- Marriage license (official or certified copy) if you qualify as a spouse of a veteran.

If you have used benefits at another institution you will need:

- Request for Change of Program of Place of Training (VA Form 22-5495)

If you are a transient student, following a degree plan offered by another institution, you will need:

- VA Form 315 initiated by the parent institution(or in the case of the University of Texas, a parent institution form)
- Change of Program or Place of Training (VA Form 22-5495)

If you are enrolled at ACC and your parent school concurrently, you will need:

VA Form 315 initiated by the parent institution (or in the case of the University of Texas, a parent institution form)

Chapter 35
Monthly Payment Schedule:

Full time	12 or more hours*	$404.00
3/4 time	9-11 hours*	303.00
1/2 time	6-8 hours*	202.00

When enrolled at less than a half-time rate, you would be eligible for reimbursement for the cost of tuition and fees only.

16

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Chapter 106
Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program

Chapter 106 is an educational assistance program for members of the Selected Reserve that took effect on July 1, 1985. It is funded by the Department of Defense and administered by the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA).

Eligibility: You may be eligible if you satisfy the criteria listed below:

1. You enlisted in the Selected Reserves after July 1, 1985 and executed an agreement to serve for a period of six years. If you are an officer, your agreement to serve in the Selected Reserves for six years is in addition to any other period of obligated Selected Reserve service you are required to perform.

2. You have completed the requirements of a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate. The high school education requirement must be met prior to completion of Initial Active Duty for Training (IADT), except for persons who reenlist or extend their enlistment to satisfy the six year reserve obligation.

3. You must have completed Initial Active Duty for Training (IADT), if applicable.

4. You are not receiving an ROTC scholarship.

Eligibility is determined by the Department of Defense.

Entitlement: 36 months of educational assistance based on full time enrollment.

Delimiting Date: Entitlements of unused educational assistance benefits will normally expire on the earlier of the following dates:

1. Ten years from the date eligibility began, or

2. The date of separation from the Selected Reserves.

Effective November 18, 1988, persons who are separated from the selected reserve because of a disability, on or after the date Chapter 106 entitlement is established, may remain eligible to use Chapter 106 benefits. In such a case, the individual's delimiting date will be 10 years from the date entitlement was established.

Prohibition on Receiving Credit under Two Programs: An individual may not earn entitlement under Chapters 32 and 106 based on the same period of active duty. The individual must elect whether the period of active duty is to be credited to Chapter 32 or Chapter 106.

This prohibition applies in the same way for Chapters 30 and 106.

Programs Allowed: Undergraduate degrees and non-college degree programs at institutes of higher learning (A reservist may receive benefits for another undergraduate program after he or she has completed a bachelor's degree.).

Flight training for a four year period beginning September 30, 1990 and ending on September 30, 1994.

Effective October 1, 1990: Cooperative, correspondence, independent study (without concurrent enrollment in resident training), non-college degree programs at schools other than institutions of higher learning, on-the-job training, apprenticeship programs, and refresher courses.

Parallel Studies Course Work: Effective October 1, 1990, students will be eligible for payment for courses from the Parallel Studies Department provided that the courses are approved and are prerequisites to required courses.

Advance Payment: Allowed

Work Study: Effective May 1, 1990, Chapter 106 students are eligible for work study for services relating to the Chapter 106 program performed at Department of Defense (DOD) facilities.

Tutorial Assistance: Not allowed

Applicable Forms:

If you have never used veterans educational benefits before, you will need:

- Application for Benefits (VA Form 22-1990)
- Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program (G.I.Bill) Notice of Basic Eligibility (DD Form 2384)

If you have used benefits at another institution, you will need:

- Change of Program or Place of Training (VA Form 22-1995)

If you are transient student, following a degree plan offered by another institution, you will need:

- VA Form 315 initiated by the parent institution (or in the case of the University of Texas, a parent institution form)
- Change of Program or Place of Training (VA Form 22-1995)

If you are enrolled at ACC and your parent school concurrently, you will need:

- VA Form 315 initiated by the parent institution (or, the case of the University of Texas, a parent institution form)

Chapter 106
Monthly Payment Schedule

Full time	12 or more hours*	$170.00
3/4 time	9-11 hours*	128.00
1/2 time	6-8 hours*	85.00
Less than 1/2 time		43.00**

* unless course work does not equal to standard class sessions

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VETERANS Newsletter

Volume I *Northern Virginia Community College* *March 1993*

MONTGOMERY GI BILL INCREASE

Effective April 1, 1993, basic educational assistance rates under the Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30) will increase to $400 per month for full-time participants who initially serve three years or more on active duty; $325 per month for those who serve two years of active duty; and $190 per month for full-time participants in the Selected Reserve Program (Chapter 106). Veterans attending college at less than full time will receive a pro-rated benefit based on actual training time.

Chapter 31 Benefits Increase

Vocational Rehabilitation benefits (Chapter 31) will increase by 10 percent on October 1, 1993. Future increases will be indexed to the consumer price index.

Chapter 30 Participation

Participation in the Montgomery GI Bill has continued to increase at a very rapid rate. The period October 1, 1991 to September 30, 1992 showed a 35.2% increase nationwide over the same period a year ago. The actual numbers were 144,238 in FY 91 and 194,945 in FY 92. FY 93 projections of 249,800 participates represents a 28% increase.

At Northern Virginia Community College, our enrollment of veterans with the Montgomery GI Bill increased 39 percent over this one year period - from 350 in the Fall 1991 to 486 in the Fall 1992. We certified a total of 885 veterans for payment in the fall semester 1992.

Editor:
Rolland W. Vess
College Veterans Advisor

What's Inside:

New Legislation!
New VA Toll-Free No.
Marine College Fund?
Virginia Tax Refund?

Tuition Rates Per Credit Hour

Virginia	Out-of-State
$41.00	$142.00

Eligible Military Spouse or Dependent - $91.50

Spring Semester

16-Week Session
1-18-93 to 5-14-93
8 Week Sessions
1-18-93 to 3-13-93
3-22-93 to 5-14-93

Summer Semester

(Tuition may change)

12 Week Session
5-17-93 to 8-6-93
8 Week Sessions
5-17-93 to 7-9-93
6-14-93 to 8-6-93

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New Legislation for 1993

Many changes are expected this year. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 93 was signed into law October 23, 1992 and the Veterans Benefits Act of 1992 was signed on October 29, 1992.

1. Effective July 1, 1993, we will no longer report the number of standard class sessions for accelerated terms. We will report the term dates and the number of credits. The VA will compute the credit hour equivalent and base training time on the lesser of these two numbers.

2. Chapter 30 eligibility will be restored to individuals who, due to interrupted service, were not on active duty on October 19, 1984 but who had active service sometime during the period beginning on October 19, 1984 and continued to serve beyond July 1, 1985 the period required to establish entitlement under Chapter 30.

3. Chapter 30 eligibility may be restored to an individual who was on active duty on August 2, 1990, and did not complete the requirements of a secondary school diploma or equivalency certificate before leaving active duty. He or she will have two years from the date of enactment to complete either requirement.

4. Individuals who are discharged by reason of disability, hardship, or reduction in force after less than 12 months of active duty, and later reenter service, will be deemed to have served a continuous period of active duty equal to the total combined service.

5. Effective September 1, 1993, an individual who was initially obligated to serve only two years of active duty, but actually serves a period of three years, will be provided the same level of benefits under Chapter 30 as one who performs an initial obligated period of active duty of three years.

6. Allows the use of Chapter 30, 32 and 106 benefits for solo flying hours up to the minimum required for the rating or certification being pursued during the trial period October 1, 1992 through September 30, 1994.

7. Chapter 106 students may now receive benefits for tutorial assistance.

8. Reservists who are entitled to Chapter 106 benefits may continue to receive these benefits even though their reserve unit is deactivated during the period October 1, 1991 through September 30, 1995. In addition, certain reserve members who are involuntarily separated from the Selected Reserve during the same period may continue to qualify for VA benefits.

9. The Department of Defense has begun a program titled the "Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act of 1992" to assist individuals leaving active duty to obtain employment through participation in significant training leading to employment in stable and permanent positions.

VA New Nationwide Toll-Free Number

The VA now has a single nationwide toll-free number to make it easier for veterans and their dependents to inquire about and apply for VA benefits. **1-800-827-1000** may be dialed from anywhere in the U.S. Dialing automatically connects the caller to the nearest VA regional office.

Errors or Injustices in Military Records

Veterans have the right to have records that reflect correct and accurate data concerning their tour of military service. In some cases, military personnel are not afforded adequate counseling concerning their rights and benefits. Miscounseling upon separation can cause problems for the service member in that documented records do not always reflect the true and accurate intention of the service policy or public law.

Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1552 is the law that governs the correction of military records. All services use the same form (DD Form 149) which can be obtained from any base or post personnel office. Veteran Program Administrators are concerned about improper counseling regarding qualifying for educational benefits. If you feel that you were not adequately counselled about your educational benefits while on active duty, and that your claim for benefits may be denied by the DVA, consider using a DD Form 149. Most veteran service organizations will assist you in applying for correction of military records.

Disabled Retirees' Offset Pay

Congressional negotiators killed a proposal to order the Department of Defense to come up with a plan and the money to end what is known as the concurrent receipts offset.

The Senate version of the 1993 Defense Authorization Bill would have ordered the Department of Defense to put money into the budget to start paying full retired pay to disabled retirees. Money was the key issue; ending the offset would cost $1 billion a year. Negotiators have recommended studying the matter further.

DIC Compensation

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payments to the surviving spouse of a veteran whose service-connected death occurred on or after January 1, 1993 have been changed. The old schedule of benefits which was based on the military rank of the deceased veteran has been eliminated.

A monthly base rate of $750 will be payable to the surviving spouse of such a veteran. That rate would be increased by $165 per month if the veteran had been totally disabled due to service-connected disabilities continuously for at least eight years prior to death. The surviving spouse of a veteran who died before January 1, 1993 will receive the higher of either the new rate or the benefit under the old schedule.

Disability Compensation Increase in Benefits

Compensation payments for disabled veterans and survivors of service members who died from service-connected causes received a year-end cost of living increase in their monthly payments effective December 1, 1992. Benefits were increased by 3 percent and were received in January 1993. Last year's increase was 3.7 percent.

Lump Sum Payments

Veterans, servicepersons, and dependents receiving training under Chapter 30 and 35 are issued lump-sum payments for less than one-half time training. Payment is computed on tuition charges. Chapter 32 and 106 have separate training rates for less than one-half time. Charges against entitlement are equal to training time used each term.

A Marine Corps College Fund?

If approved, this new program will provide $14,000 for up to 5,000 recruits who qualify for the program. Certain criteria must be met to qualify for the special fund, such as a score of at least 50 on the AFQT and a GCT score of 110 or higher. Participation in the fund will not cost the recruit additional money, other than the $1,200 invested under the Montgomery GI Bill.

The total educational benefits would be $28,400 for thirty-six months of full-time education. If implemented, it is estimated that 11 percent of the new recruits would qualify.

Virginia Tax Refund Case

The U. S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on December 2, 1992 and will decide whether or not states must refund unlawfully collected taxes to federal retirees. Retired federal civilian and military employees paid taxes on their federal pensions from 1985 to 1989 while the pensions of state retirees were not taxed. The U. S. Supreme Court ruled in 1989 that the practice was discriminatory. Virginia and 20 other states quickly rewrote their tax statutes to begin taxing the pensions of state retirees. Federal retirees filed suits asking for tax refunds for those years in which an illegal tax had been collected. The statute of limitations has restricted the years in dispute to 1985 to 1988. The Virginia Supreme Court ruled that the state did not have to pay the refunds. It will be several months before the U. S. Supreme Court makes a decision in this case.

New VA Chief on Board

Jesse Brown, a Marine Corps veteran who was wounded in Vietnam, was sworn in January 22 as Secretary of Veterans Affairs. He had been the executive director of Disabled American Veterans (DAV). In this capacity he was responsible for overseeing the DAV's national service, legislation, employment, volunteer services, and communications programs. He has served as chairman of the Vietnam Civic Committee and was a member of the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals.

Prior Credit?

The VA will stop paying your education benefits at the end of your second term of enrollment unless you request that the college evaluate your prior college and military experience. The time to request the evaluation is during your first term of enrollment. See your Campus Veterans Advisor and do it now!

Financial Aid

You may be eligible to receive student aid funds in addition to your veteran's benefits. NVCC administers over $4.4 million dollars in student aid programs such as grants, loans, and employment programs. Veterans should contact the financial aid office on their home campus for more information.

Campus	Room No	Telephone
Alexandria	AA-170A	845-6350
Annandale	CG-206	323-3427
Loudoun	LC-220D	450-2537
Manassas	MC-317	257-6635
Woodbridge	WC-221	878-5725

Register Early!

Let your veterans advisor know as soon as you register so that your certification may be sent to the VA for payment. If you register early, there should be no delay in receiving your checks.

Exit Bonuses and Benefits, Too

Public Law 102-484 provides for an individual who voluntarily separated from active duty with an honorable discharge the opportunity to participate under Chapter 30.

Participants in the Chapter 32 (VEAP) program may make an irrevocable election to participate under Chapter 30. For those who separate on or after October 23, 1992, the service will collect $1,200 from the participant's military pay. The VA is charged with collecting the $1,200 from those individuals who separated prior to that date.

The services have begun sending benefit notification letters to an estimated 55,000 personnel who voluntarily separated from active duty between December 5, 1991 and October 22, 1992. They are being invited to apply for retroactive transition benefits. They are entitled to the same level of health care coverage and commissary privileges as members who were involuntarily separated. It also gives them a second chance to enroll in the Montgomery GI Bill.

GI Bill Death Benefit

The law governing the death benefit portion of the Montgomery GI Bill has changed making eligible the survivors of a service-connected death, cause while a person is on discharge from active duty, provided by the survivors and receive a refund of contributions paid by the servicemember only if he died while on active duty.

Work-Study Allowances

Certain offices in Northern Virginia which serve veterans can use extra help as the number of veterans increases. Anyone who is receiving educational benefits from the GI Bill may apply for the work/study allowance program as long as they are enrolled at least three-quarter time and are now receiving educational benefits from their GI Bill. Students can earn up to $5,525 each academic year by working 25 hours per week.

Check with your Campus Veterans Advisor to see if you can earn some extra money and help other veterans as well.

Joan Hyde Retires!

The layout and graphics for all of the past issues of the Veterans Newsletters have been the result of Joan Hyde's work in assisting with its production.

Joan sold her home in West Springfield to build a new one in the country. While it is under construction, Joan and her husband, Laron, are living in their condo in South Carolina. We miss you Joan!

Vess on Active Duty

Rolland Vess, College Veterans Advisor and Editor of the Veterans Newsletter, has been selected to serve the Secretary of the Navy as a member of the Advisory Committee on Retired Personnel (ACRP). He will be on active duty working at the Pentagon from March 21 - 26, 1993.

ACRP is a group of 22 retired Navy and Marine Corps officers and enlisted personnel who review the items submitted by the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps and may originate or consider other items related to retired military personnel. The ACRP may also provide comments and recommendations of immediate concern within the Department of the Navy.

CURRENT MONTHLY BENEFIT SCHEDULE (April 1, 1993)

Chapter 30, Montgomery GI Bill	2 Year Enlistment	3 Year Enlistment	Chapter 34/30
FullTime (12 or more credits)	$325.00	$400.00	3 Year Enlistment Rate plus
3/4 Time (9 to 11 credits)	$243.75	$300.00	1/2 of Chapter 34 rate.
1/2 Time (6 to 8 credits)	$162.50	$200.00	(dependents included
Less than 1/2 Time (4 or 5 credits)	$162.50	$200.00	if member is not on
1/4 Time or Less (1 to 3 credits)	$ 81.25	$100.00	active duty)

The monthly rate for servicepersons on active duty and for veterans training at less than 1/2 time may not exceed the monthly prorated charges for tuition and fees or the rates indicated in this table, whichever is less.

Chapter 34/30, Montgomery GI Bill

Chapter 34/30 under the Montgomery GI Bill applies to those who had eligibility for Chapter 34 remaining on December 31, 1989 and were found to be eligible for Chapter 30 benefits. Chapter 34/30 veterans who are not on active duty are also entitled to a dependents allowance equal to one-half of what they would have been entitled to under the old GI Bill. This table shows the monthly educational benefit for Chapter 30 plus 1/2 of the entitlement under Chapter 34:

Number of Dependents	0	1	2	For Each Additional Dependent
Full-Time	$588.00	$624.00	$655.00	$16.00
3/4 Time	$441.00	$468.00	$491.25	$12.00
1/2 Time	$294.00	$312.00	$327.50	$ 8.50
Less than 1/2 Time	$294.00	*		
1/4 Time or Less	$147.00			

* Veterans who are not on active duty and are training at 1/2 time or more will receive an additional allowance for dependents as shown in the chart above. Members on active duty and veterans training less than 1/2 time will be paid the monthly rate as a single person or tuition only -- whichever is less.

Chapter 31, Vocational Rehabilitation

Number of Dependents	0	1	2	For Each Additional Dependent
Full-Time	$333.00	$413.00	$486.00	$35.00
3/4 Time	$250.00	$310.00	$364.00	$27.00
1/2 Time	$167.00	$207.00	$244.00	$18.00

Chapter 32, Veterans Education Assistance Program (VEAP)

Payment for students attending college under Chapter 32 (VEAP) varies according to contributions. Your entitlement may be obtained by calling the DVA Regional Office, Washington, DC at (202) 872-1151 or 1-800-827-1000.

Chapter 35, Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program (DEAP)

Full-Time	$404.00	(There are no additional
3/4 Time	$304.00	allowances for dependents)
1/2 Time	$202.00	

Chapter 106, Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program

Full-Time	$190.00
3/4 Time	$142.50
1/2 Time	$ 95.00
1/4 Time	$ 47.50

VETERANS' BENEFITS TIMETABLE

After Separation from Service, You Have:	Benefits	Where to apply:
10 years	**GI Education, Chapters 30, 32 and 106:** The VA will provide financial assistance for the education and training of eligible participants. Vocational and educational counseling is available upon request.	Any VA office or Veterans Advisor
10 years for spouse. Age 26 for children	**Dependents' Education, Chapter 35:** When the veteran's death or permanent disability resulted from active duty, dependents may be entitled to an educational allowance.	Any VA office or Veterans Advisor
12 years, although extensions are possible under certain conditions	**Vocational Rehabilitation, Chapter 31:** As part of a rehabilitation program, the VA will pay tuition, books, tools, or other expenses and provide a monthly living allowance. Employment assistance is also available to help a rehabilitated veteran get a job. A seriously disabled veteran may be provided services and assistance to increase independence in daily living.	Any VA office or Veterans Advisor
No time limit	**GI Loans:** The VA will guarantee your loan for the purchase of a home, manufactured home, or condominium.	Any VA office
No time limit	**Disability Compensation:** The VA pays compensation for disabilities incurred or aggravated during military service.	Any VA office
1 year from date of mailing of notice of initial determination	**Appeal to Board of Veterans Appeals:** Appellate review will be initiated by a notice of disagreement and completed by a substantive appeal after a statement of the case has been furnished.	VA office or hospital making the initial determination
No time limit	**Medical Care:** The VA provides hospital care covering the full range of medical services. Outpatient treatment is available for all service-connected conditions, or nonservice-connected conditions in certain cases. Alcohol and drug treatment is available.	Any VA office
Time varies	**Burial Benefits:** The VA provides certain burial benefits, including interment in a national cemetery, a monument and partial reimbursement for burial expenses.	VA National Cemetery having grave space, any VA office
No time limit	**Readjustment Counseling:** General or psychological counseling is provided to assist in readjusting to civilian life.	Any Vet Center, VA office, or hospital
Within 90 days of separation	**One-Time Dental Treatment:** The VA provides one-time dental care for certain service-connected dental conditions.	Any VA office or hospital
No time limit	**Dental Treatment:** Treatment for veterans with dental disabilities resulting from combat wounds or service injuries and certain POW's and other service-connected disabled veterans.	Any VA office or hospital
1 year from date of notice of VA disability rating	**GI Insurance:** Low cost life insurance (up to $10,000) is available for veterans with service-connected disabilities. Veterans who are totally disabled may apply for a waiver of premiums on these policies.	Any VA office
120 days or 1 year beyond with evidence of insurability, or up to year if totally disabled	**Veterans Group Life Insurance:** SGLI may be converted to a 5-year nonrenewable term policy. At the end of the 5-year term, VGLI may be converted to an individual policy with a participating insurance company.	Office of Servicemen's Group Life Ins., 213 Wash. St. Newark NJ 07102 or any VA office
No time limit	**Employment:** Assistance is available in finding employment in private industry, in Federal service, and in local or state government.	Local State employment service offic. U.S. Office of Personnel Mgmt. Labor Department or any VA office
Limited Time	**Unemployment Compensation:** The amount of benefit and payment period vary among States. Apply after separation.	State employment service office
90 days	**Reemployment:** Apply to your former employer for employment.	Employer

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Veterans Advisors
Northern Virginia Community College

VETERANS ADVISORS ON EACH CAMPUS ARE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS YOUR EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS. THEY WILL HELP YOU WITH YOUR APPLICATION AND GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE PROCESS OF ADMISSION, COUNSELING, REGISTRATION, CREDIT EVALUATION, AND GRADUATION.

THEY CAN ALSO ANSWER MANY OTHER QUESTIONS.....STOP BY YOUR NEAREST CAMPUS VA OFFICE OR PHONE. OFFICE HOURS MAY VARY ON EACH CAMPUS.

ALEXANDRIA CAMPUS

VETERANS ADVISOR
HOPE DAILEY
ROOM AA 136
(703) 845-6352

ANNANDALE CAMPUS

VETERANS ADVISOR
STEVE SMITH
ROOM CG 213
(703) 323-3145

LOUDOUN CAMPUS

VETERANS ADVISOR
JAMIE NIKSTAITIS
ROOM LC 220E
(703) 450-2583

MANASSAS CAMPUS

VETERANS ADVISOR
ASSISTANT
MARY THOMPSON
ROOM MC 330
(703) 257-6675

WOODBRIDGE CAMPUS
VETERANS ADVISOR
CAROL BAIRD
ROOM WC 225
(703) 878-5748

COLLEGE VETERANS ADVISOR

ROLLAND (RON) VESS
BRAULT BUILDING, ROOM CH 109
ANNANDALE CAMPUS
(703) 323-3490

Chairman Montgomery to Mr. Bob Manhan, Veterans of Foreign Wars

1. The existing Veterans Education Outreach Program was designed to enhance veterans' certification, outreach, recruitment, counseling and tutorial services. The program under consideration would provide similar services to veterans receiving educational benefits.

In your view, are veterans better served by having these services on college campuses?

Yes, Mr. Chairman, the VFW believes veterans would be better served by providing these services on college campuses simply because they all focus on the entitlement the veteran is engaged in at that point in time. However, I would be less than candid if I did not add that the VFW believes that there is no longer an overriding need today for those services because we are dealing with an entirely new generation of veterans using a significantly different educational entitlement than either the WWII G.I. Bill or the Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program. Today, almost all veterans are high school graduates upon entering the service and while on active duty they have elected to contribute part of their military pay to earn their full educational entitlement. Also, after having been on active duty for even an initial enlistment of three or four years, the probability that we are dealing with an educationally disadvantaged person is almost nil. When we consider these elements, plus the fact that the veteran is counseled by his separating branch of the military service within 60 to 90 days regarding post-service educational entitlements and the fact that VA is never more than a telephone call away, we really do not think reviving the Veterans' Education Outreach Program (VEOP) today is important enough when we consider other VA programs that will need all the help they can get in the form of FY 1994 appropriated monies.

2. During Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, VEOP representatives were instrumental in ensuring that veteran students were not penalized for withdrawing from courses on short notice or, in some cases, having to report for deployment before notifying school officials.

Can you offer some alternative suggestions as to how such problems would be resolved in the absence of VEOP.

The historical 1991 VEOP service was very important and very much appreciated by the VFW at the time. In fact, because my veteran service organization expects a greater use of reserve and national guard units to supplement the active duty forces in the foreseeable future, we think this is a good time to consider legislation that will address the problem in a general policy statement. For example, add to Chapter 36 of title 38, USC, something to the effect that whenever a student who is a member of an active duty military service and must be withdrawn from school for the good of the service, the student will either be given full credit for the course(s) in which he is presently enrolled or will not be penalized by the college/university for withdrawal. The decision to grant full academic credit lies with the institution. However, there is no option regarding the "no penalty" clause. It will be the responsibility of VA to ensure what any university's or college's administrative office standard operating procedure is when dealing with students using VA educational money. I realize this is a very easy solution but the response is based primarily on the VEOP representatives' pioneer work you cited.

3. Bob, in your testimony, you proposed that the $3 million requested for funding VEOP be spent on the TAP/DTAP programs as they provide counseling, including educational counseling, to separating service members.

In your experiences with TAP/DTAP, has counseling been extended to include the comprehensive areas covered under the VEOP Program?

Do you believe that TAP/DTAP personnel possess the expertise to offer the education-related services provided by VEOP personnel?

In a word, Mr. Chairman, my answer is "no." I have never experienced any TAP/DTAP educational counseling that was so completely and articulately covered as I have witnessed by several different university personnel who were responsible for their respective institution's VEOP, among their other assigned administrative duties. However, it is only fair to add that bill H.R. 996 recognized that VEOP is very complex and that some institutions of higher learning may not be able to carry out the counseling and informational services by themselves and that a consortium agreement may be entered into with similar institutions within the same community. We believe that TAP/DTAP personnel can obtain enough skills to issue concise, meaningful packets of current, although generalized, information dealing with VA's outreach, special education programs, readjustment counseling programs, and job training opportunities under both the VA and Department of Labor programs. I would equate the TAP/DTAP effort to someone trying to get a drink of water from an open fire hydrant whereas the VEOP is akin to drinking from a bucket. The point we are trying to make here is that while neither VEOP nor TAP/DTAP is a perfect solution, both will quench a thirst and both will point a veteran in the same right direction to pursue the entitlement or any information being sought. Therefore, the VFW has enough faith in the intelligence and tenacity of today's veteran to believe they can and will seek out the proper parties to get things done.

In resting our case, the VFW certainly acknowledges the good intentions of bill H.R. 996. We further recognize the splendid bipartisan cooperation that is so often the hallmark of yourself, Mr. Chairman, and minority member, Mr. Chris Smith of New Jersey. However, in good conscience the VFW cannot support any new individual legislative initiative(s) that is/are not fully funded. To support H.R. 996 would most probably result in the further reduction or erosion of an existing veterans entitlement or program.

AMVETS' answers to additional questions regarding the Veterans Educaiton Outreach Program (VEOP).

1. The existing Veterans Education Outreach Program was designed to enhance veterans' certification, outreach , recruitment, counseling and tutorial services. The program under consideration would provide similar services to veterans receiving educational benefits.

In your view, are veterans better served by having these services on college campus?

Answer: The presence of a VEOP office on campus can only increase the effectiveness of the three-way partnership between the veteran, the school and the VA. If properly implemented, the veteran will have an advocate in dealing with the school administration, an accountable point of contact in dealing with the VA and gain access to a wider range of VA services. The school will have a conduit of information to not only veterans currently enrolled, but also to attract well-qualified veterans as future students. VA will gain by having a knowledgeable point of contact on campus to work out administrative problems with beneficiaries.

There should probably be some dollar threshold that once exceeded, would require schools to provide a VEOP-type office to assist veterans. Such an office could be funded individually by school, or as part of a consortium. VEOP funds could be used to defray part of the cost.

2. During Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, VEOP representatives were instrumental in ensuring that veteran students were not penalized for withdrawing from courses on short notice, or, in some cases having to report for deployment before notifying school officials.

Can you offer some alternative suggestions as to how such problems would be resolved in the absence of VEOP?

Answer: Schools would have to accept responsibility by providing the resources to accomplish the mission of VEOP. Lacking such services, administrative problems, certification, late arriving benefit checks and counseling would be left to a patchwork of service agencies - if they existed. Otherwise, veterans would be on their won to deal with two bureaucracies - the VA and the school.

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